



# SKIPPER: THE GUIDE DOG

ARTHUR C. BARTLETT

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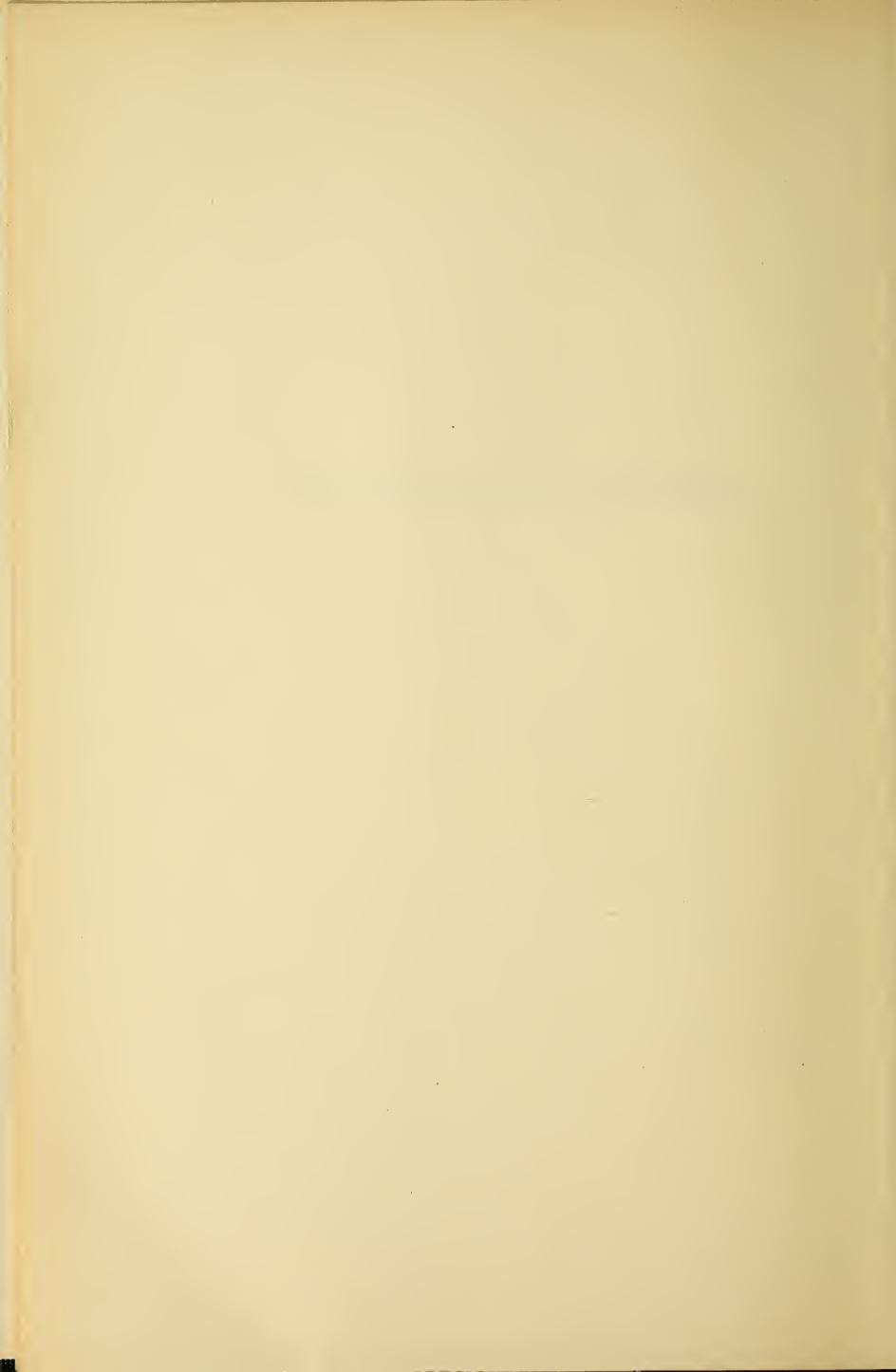
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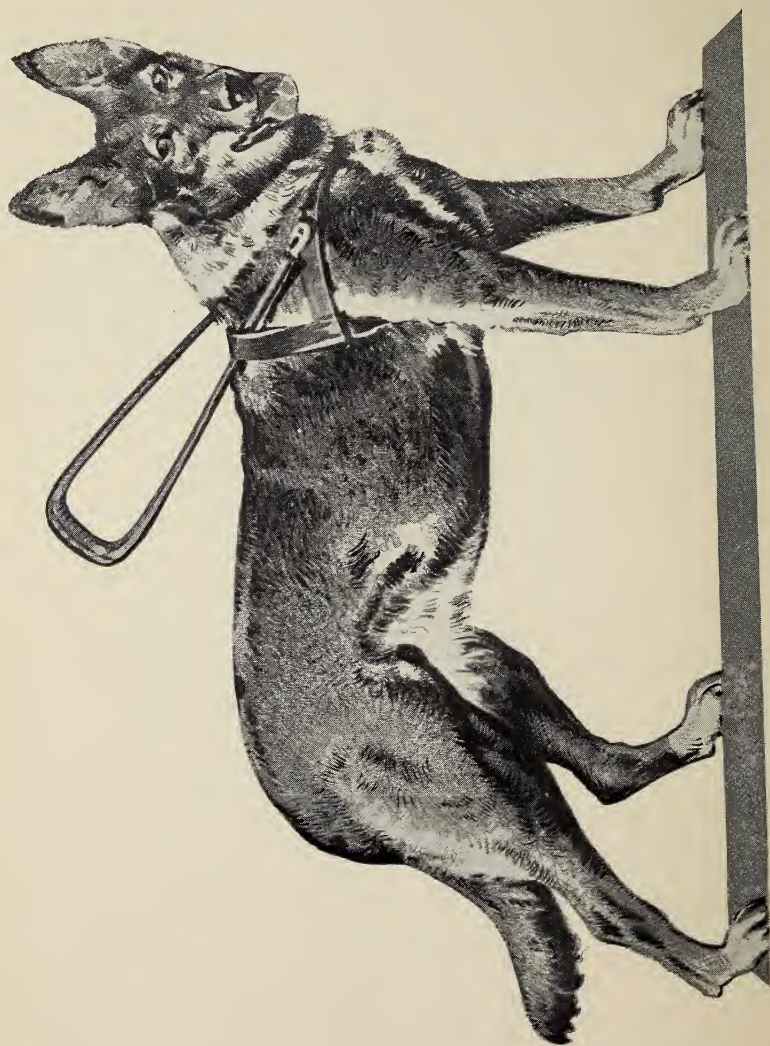




SKIPPER, THE GUIDE DOG







# SKIPPER

## The Guide Dog

By  
ARTHUR C. BARTLETT

Illustrated by  
HAROLD CUE



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SKIPPER, THE GUIDE DOG

Made in the United States of America

## FOREWORD

**O**UT in Morristown, New Jersey, there is one of the most remarkable and interesting schools in the world. It is called The Seeing Eye, and its students are dogs and men. The men are blind, and the dogs are taught to be all that the name of the school implies: their "seeing eyes."

Anyone who understands dogs doesn't need to be told that they can have a profound influence on the lives of their human friends. But the difference that one of these Seeing Eye dogs can make in the life of a blind man is almost beyond the imagination of us who have our sight.

I shall never forget sitting in the comfortable living-room of The Seeing Eye, and listening to Colonel Morris S. Frank as he told me what a dog had meant to him. He had lost his eyesight just as he was about to start out, like all ambitious young men, to conquer the world. For a time, his spirits were dashed almost to the point of utter hopelessness. Then somebody read to him an article about work being done in Switzerland to train German-shepherd dogs to lead the blind. Colonel Frank went to

Switzerland to see if he could get one of these dogs. Six months later, he came back with the dog who has been his inseparable companion ever since—Buddy. And as he met friends at the dock, his triumphal greeting was: "Buddy has signed my Declaration of Independence."

As I went out for a walk with Colonel Frank and Buddy, I could well understand what he meant. With the faithful Buddy leading him, he stepped out as confidently and as energetically as though he could see everything that lay before him. With Buddy, he has traveled all over the country, in strange cities, over strange roads, in trains, boats, automobiles, and on foot.

They have had adventures together, and many of these he told me. More than once, Buddy has saved his life. That is her job. And it is a job she loves, because Colonel Frank is not only her responsibility, but her god. Between them has grown up a kinship that is about as near perfect harmony as anything can be on this earth.

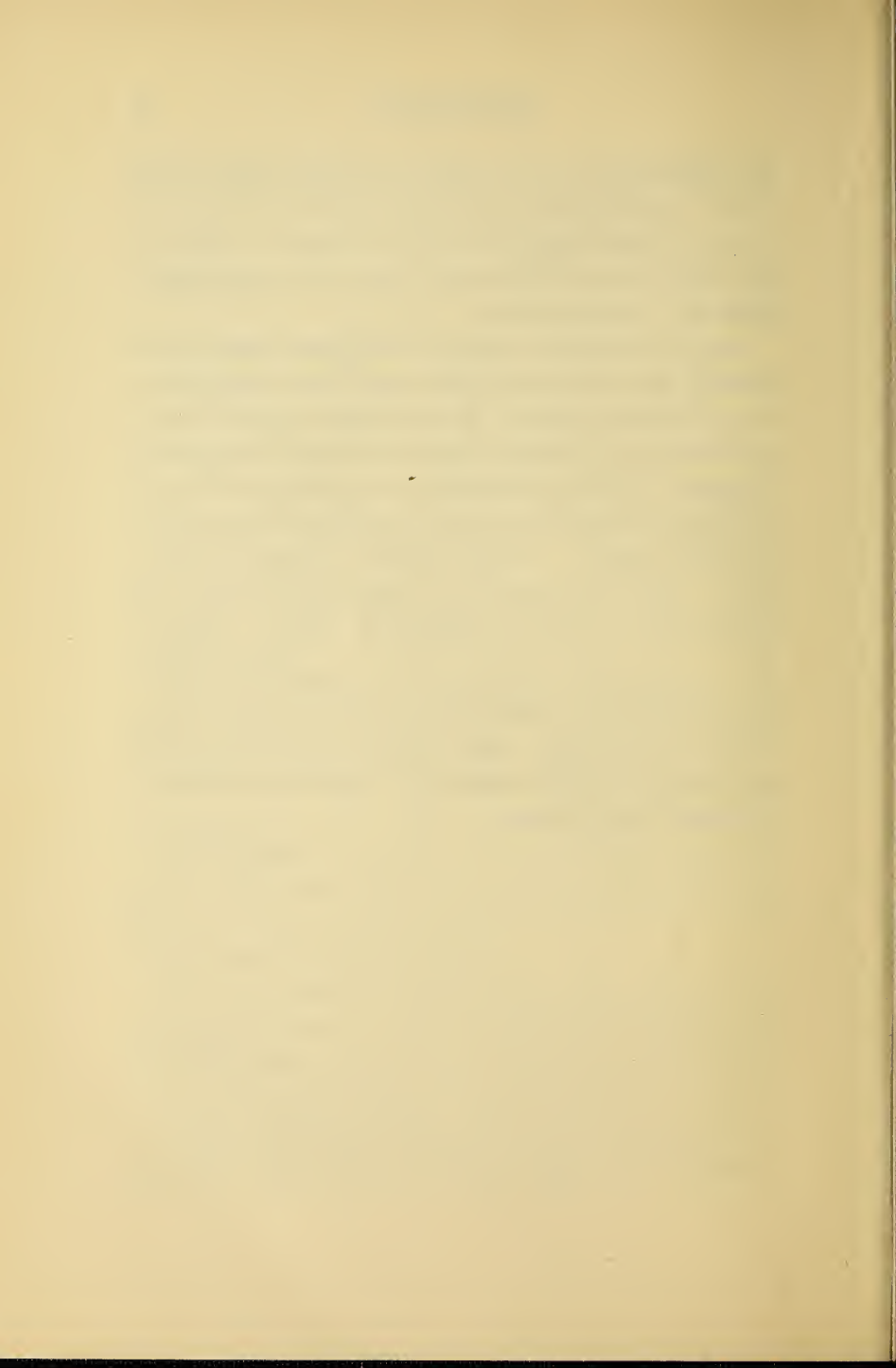
It was because Buddy had made such a vast change in his own life that Colonel Frank took the initiative in getting a school started in this country, so that others might benefit as he has.

It is a thrilling thing to go out to that school, to talk with Colonel Frank and Mr. William

H. Ebeling, who is in active charge, and to see their magnificent, intelligent dogs in action. I want, in this place, to acknowledge my debt to Mr. Ebeling and Colonel Frank for their kindness and coöperation.

It goes without saying, I suppose, that *The Seeing Eye* serves as the model for the school in my story; and in it you will meet the personnel of the school, though under disguised names. For I have told here the story of a dog trained, as *The Seeing Eye* dogs are trained, to lead the blind. I have tried to show in this story just how tremendous the effect of one of these dogs can be on the life of her master. And if anyone thinks I have exaggerated the possibilities of action by a blind man, even with a dog's help, I only wish the doubter could see some of *The Seeing Eye's* graduates in action, as I have done.

A. C. B.





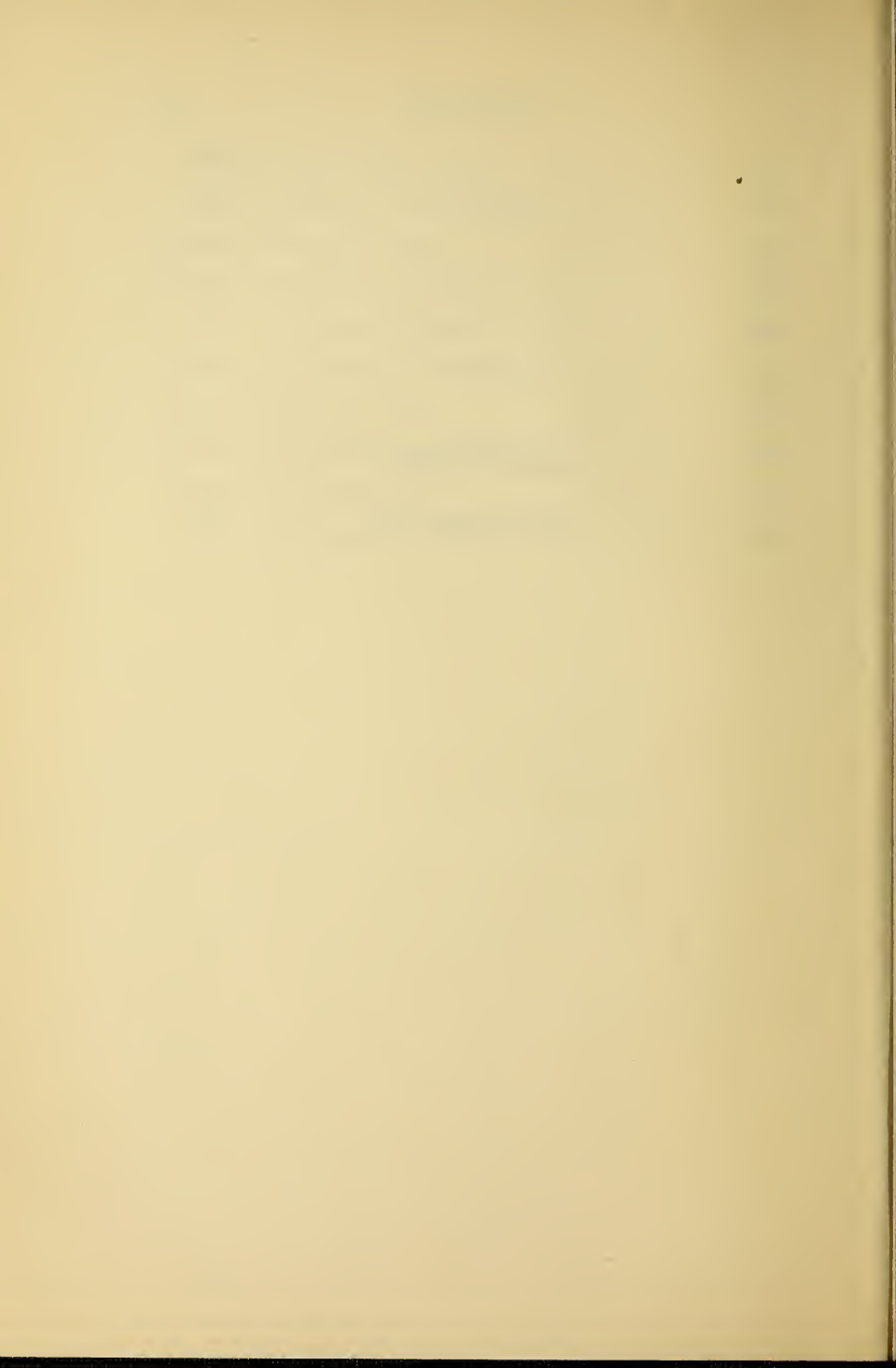
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# CHAPTER I

## THE NEW PUP



## CHAPTER I

### THE NEW PUP

**B**EN DILLON watched the yellow and white airplane circle over the airport, and then come lightly, almost gingerly, to earth. He started running toward it as soon as the plane hit the ground and started to taxi down the field. The plane slowed down, and stopped; and the pilot, a tall young man in aviator's jumpers, climbed out and began to take off his helmet and look around the field.

"Yo, Jerry," Ben yelled, still running.

Jerome Dillon turned and waved both arms, a smile spreading over his tanned face. "Ah, there you are, Ben," he called. "I was looking for you."

Ben dashed forward, breathless, and Jerry seized him affectionately by both arms. "Say, you've grown in a year's time," he said, holding him off at arm's length. "You're almost as tall as I am. I guess I won't be the big brother much longer if you keep this up."

Ben grinned at his brother. He was tall for his sixteen years, but he still had to look up at Jerry, ten years his senior, who stood well over



six feet. "I guess growing must run in the family," Ben chided. "How long are you going to be here?"

"Well, not as long as I'd like to," said Jerry, setting his lips together. "Maybe a week."

Ben's face grew sober. "Only a week?"

"But say," Jerry cut in, smiling again. "I almost forgot something. I brought you a little pal to keep you company after I leave."

Jerry stepped quickly over to the plane, reached down into the cockpit, and brought his hand up again in the manner of a magician producing a rabbit from a hat. But the fuzzy little mass of life in his hand wasn't a rabbit.

"A pup!" Ben cried.

"Right," said Jerry, setting the bewildered looking pup down on the turf. "She's only three months old, but when she grows up she'll be a police dog—and one of the best in the country, according to the breeder I bought her from. He gave me her pedigree and everything—real German-shepherd stock from Europe, and all that."

"Pedigree be hanged," said Ben, squatting down to fondle the pup as she sidled questioningly up to him. "Who cares about her pedigree? I'd be strong for that pup if she didn't have an ancestor to her name. She's great,

Jerry. . . . Aren't you, old-timer?" he concluded, picking the pup up in his arms.

The pup looked up at him, wonderingly, then settled down in his arms with a contented sigh. "What's her name, Jerry?" Ben asked.

Jerry shrugged. "That's up to you. You name her and you can have her."

"I'll name her all right," said Ben. "But I guess I'll have to take a little time to think about it. Any old name won't be good enough for this baby. She's got to have a name that will fit."

"That's all right with me," said Jerry, "and I guess it's probably all right with the pup. But I suspect she'd like some food without waiting too long for it. I'll get the old bus tucked away, and we'll go home and see if we can't find her a little milk."

Jerry turned his attention to the plane, and Ben put the pup down on the grass again, and laughed at her antics until Jerry rejoined him. Then, with the pup in Ben's arms, they walked over and hailed a taxi.

"It certainly will be fun having the pup," said Ben. "Thanks ever so much for getting her."

"Well," said Jerry, "I thought you'd like her. And I didn't know when I'd be getting

back here again. I thought maybe she'd sort of take my place."

Ben nodded. He understood. Many people around Mountville thought Jerry Dillon was something of an enigma. They thought of him as a young man who had taken up flying, and who, of late years, had taken to starting out in his little yellow and white plane and being gone for months on end. Where? Why? Nobody seemed to know. But Ben knew. He knew all about the time, three years before, when a secret service man had engaged Jerry to take him on a quick trip down the New Jersey coast in his plane to investigate a tip that smugglers were operating down there. And he knew that out of that trip, and Jerry's part in the capture of the smugglers, had come a chance for Jerry himself to join the government service. That was why Jerry seldom knew how long he would be gone when he started out, nor where his trail might lead. But it was just as well not to have too many people know all that Ben knew. The little yellow and white plane had proved a great aid in apprehending criminals; but if it should become generally known that it carried a secret service man, it would be much too easy to recognize.

Even Mr. and Mrs. Brown, with whom Ben

lived in Mountville, didn't know the nature of Jerry's occupation. They knew that he was an aviator; and as they were rather vague in their understanding of the business of aviation, that seemed to them explanation enough of his livelihood.

Mr. Brown ran a little tailoring establishment, and lived just around the corner from the house where the Dillons had used to live. Jerry and Ben had both known the Browns all their lives; and when their mother died two years before—their father having been killed in the war—Jerry had arranged with Mrs. Brown to provide a home for Ben. It was Jerry's home, too, of course, when he was in Mountville. But that was not very often.

Ben had grown accustomed to living with the Browns. They were elderly and kind, and made things as pleasant for him as they knew how. But it wasn't like having a family of one's own. He couldn't take his troubles and his triumphs to them, the way he had been able to do with his own family. If he tried it, they would be sympathetic and interested, but they wouldn't really understand.

That was why it always seemed so good to have Jerry come home. He could share all the ups and downs of life with Jerry; and Jerry would make the ups seem better, and the downs



seem not so bad. It was fun to fly with Jerry in his little yellow and white plane, fun to go fishing with him, or to a baseball game; but when Jerry was away, Ben knew that it wasn't the flying or the fishing or the baseball games that he missed. It was just Jerry's companionship.

Now he would have the dog.

Looking down at the dark-haired little pup, snoozing on the taxicab seat beside him, he tried to form a mental picture of what she would look like when she was grown up.

"Did you see her father and mother when you bought her?" he asked.

Jerry nodded. "Beauties, both of them. And the breeder swears they've got more brains than most humans."

"In that case," said Ben, "maybe we'd better make a secret service dog out of the pup when she grows up."

"She'd find it a pretty dull life if she didn't hit anything more exciting than I have lately," Jerry said, grinning.

"I'll bet!" said Ben, skeptically.

"Really," said Jerry. "I've been doing nothing but dry routine stuff for months. It's about time I got my nose into something interesting, for a change."

The taxicab pulled up in front of their door,



and all talk of Jerry's travels was temporarily dropped, as he got out to greet Mrs. Brown. "I've got a new boarder for you, Mrs. Brown," he called out, "and she demands milk immediately."

"Goodness, me!" said the old lady, gazing at the puppy in Ben's arms, "where'd you get that nice puppy?"

Jerry drew himself up in mock solemnity. "What would you say," he inquired, "if I told you I captured her from a she-lion, near the coast of Madagascar?"

Mrs. Brown looked at him with the tolerant amusement of one who was used to his spoofing. "The way you go gallivanting around in that flying machine," she shot back at him, slyly smiling, "I wouldn't put it past you."

The next few days were busy ones. Jerry, expecting a call to start out again any day, was trying to cram dozens of different kinds of excursions into his few days with Ben. It was all fun. But whether he was flying or fishing or doing something else, Ben found himself continually wondering whether the pup was getting along all right at home, and eager to get back and find out. Maybe Mrs. Brown had forgotten to feed her; or maybe the pup had escaped from the back yard, and was playing out in the street, where she might get run over.

All sorts of possibilities kept entering his mind. And it was always a relief to get home and find that nothing more serious had happened than the digging up of one of Mrs. Brown's flower beds by the pup, or the pulling down of a stocking from the clothes line.

The day came when there was a telegram for Jerry. He would have to leave the next morning.

"I'll write to you when I can," he promised Ben. "And the way you're getting wrapped up in that pup, you'll hardly know I've gone."

"Rubbish!" said Ben. "You know better. But the pup's going to be good to have around, though. She's going to be lots of fun and company."

"It's about time you were giving her a name, it seems to me," said Jerry. "Or are you going to wait until she's old enough to pick one for herself?"

"Well, as a matter of fact," said Ben, "I've got a name, I guess."

Jerry waited. "Secret?" he asked, at last.

Ben grinned, a little self-consciously. "No," he said, "only I was afraid you'd think I was too sentimental. You see, I thought I'd give her a name that would be sort of in honor of you."

Jerry clapped him on the shoulder, affec-

tionately. "Come on," he demanded, "out with it."

"Well," said Ben, "she may never pilot an airplane, but her name, from now on, is Skipper."



## CHAPTER II

GROWING UP



## CHAPTER II

### GROWING UP

SKIPPER, like any young puppy, was a responsibility as well as a delight. Ben soon found that she was requiring more and more of his time and attention. But he didn't mind. She afforded him endless amusement with her puppy antics.

The way she grew was, to Ben, almost unbelievable. As soon as Jerry left, he had bought some chicken wire and built a little pen for Skipper to run in, so she would be safe from the street. He had used narrow wire, but it had looked amply high to keep the frisky little pup within bounds. But it wasn't two weeks before Skipper, growing like a weed, was able to get her paws up, and slip over the wire to freedom.

Ben got some wider wire, and built a bigger pen. That served the purpose for another two or three weeks; and then Skipper learned the trick of digging and began to excavate her way out of the pen. Then she would romp gaily around the back yard, making no attempt to leave the premises, but apparently satisfied



with having proved that she could get away if she felt like it.

“What’s the idea, Skipper?” Ben would demand, coming home to find her outside the pen again. Then Skipper would jump up at him, eagerly; and he would lift her back into the enclosure. If he came in, too, Skipper would be satisfied—more than satisfied if he would bring an old slipper or a rag which she could seize with her teeth while he yanked it around. But if Ben simply plugged up the hole and left her in there alone, it wouldn’t be long before she would be out again, hunting for him with an impudent look in her eye.

“Oh, you’re just trying to show that I’m not a good enough carpenter to build a pen that will keep you in,” Ben would say, pretending to be cross. But Skipper knew better than to take this seriously. It was only the signal for a mock fight—a pastime which she enjoyed above almost anything else. Back she would go on her haunches, barking squeakily in an attempt to be fierce, waiting for Ben to thrust out a hand toward her, so she could jump away from it and bark some more, or seize it and pretend she was tearing it to bits—very carefully, of course, so that her teeth would not really penetrate the skin. Sometimes her teeth did scratch a little, being

sharper than she realized ; but Ben didn't mind that.

But the problem of keeping her from getting loose every time he took his eyes off her became acute after she had pulled some stockings and a few other assorted articles off the clothes line, and proceeded to chew them up.

"She's a nice puppy, but I can't have such goings-on as that," Mrs. Brown declared. "You'll have to find some way to keep her from using my clothes-line for wrestling practice."

Ben saved the day by getting another length of clothes-line, and stretching it across another part of the yard. Then he got a harness for Skipper, and a light chain about eight feet long. He attached the chain to the harness at one end, and slipped the ring on the other end of the chain over the clothes-line. Thus Skipper could trot up and down the yard, from one end of the clothes-line to the other, with the ring slipping along over the clothes-line above. The chain was long enough, too, so that she could move several feet to one side or the other of the clothes-line. One end of the line was tied around a tree, which gave the pup a nice shady place to snooze when she tired of exercise.

Ben was more pleased with the arrangement

than Skipper was. She had no objections to it when Ben was out there with her, tossing a ball for her to chase or pretending to fight with her; but she looked pretty sad when Ben went away and left her there. She hated to be left alone.

Sometimes Ben humored her by taking her out on a leash; but she was still pretty small for long jaunts, and much too young and irresponsible to be allowed out of the yard without being securely held. Ben had to learn that by experience. He was reading on the front porch one day, when Skipper was about four months old, and the pup was taking a nap at his feet. Some friends drove up in a car, and Ben went out to the street to speak to them. Skipper followed. A stray piece of colored paper underneath the car intrigued her attention, and she scuttled after it.

"Come on out from under that car, Skipper," Ben commanded, but the pup didn't feel in the mood to respond.

Ben tried to reach for her, but she took it as a game, and scampered in the opposite direction. Ben ran around to the side of the car, just in time to see her ducking from the front end—straight into the path of a big motor truck. He lunged after her, and the driver of the truck put on his brakes with a great

squeak. Just by the tips of his fingers, Ben got hold of her, pulling her clear of the wheels that were bearing down on her, but throwing himself into the mudguard of the truck in doing it. Fortunately, the truck had slowed down enough so that a few bruises were the only result, but it taught Ben that puppies can't be trusted to look out for themselves in traffic.

He took the pup into the house, and told her sternly not to go into the street again. She looked up at him, repentant and subdued enough for the moment; but a few minutes later she was as playful as ever. And Ben could only grin at her indulgently.

"After all," he told her, "I suppose puppies will be puppies."

She leaped up at him, eager for another romp.

Every week saw her growing, developing, getting more mature. The puppy fat began to give way to muscle and sinew, and her bones to fill out.

"First thing you know," Ben laughed at her, "you'll be getting sense." And, as a matter of fact, that was happening too; though, of course, there were many months yet to pass before she would reach that stage of responsible maturity when puppyhood is left behind.



When Ben began to find her puppy teeth in odd corners of the yard and house, he thought it might be a sign that she had attained the dignity of doghood, but he quickly learned that she was still a puppy at heart, even with new teeth. Then he remembered how young he himself had been when he lost his baby teeth, and he realized that Skipper was entitled to her puppyish ways for a while longer.

Sometimes he was in a hurry for her to get grown up, and at other times he wanted her to remain a puppy indefinitely. He had an idea that when she got older she would be more of a real pal than she was now. As a pup, she didn't understand much except play. Most of the time, that suited Ben: he had a lot of fun playing with her, and watching her get excited over the joy of sheer activity. But there were times when he would have liked to have her for quiet, restful company, and she didn't understand that at all. Apparently the only way she knew how to keep quiet was to go to sleep.

But there came a time when she became entirely too quiet. It was when she was ten months old. She was a strapping big dog now—a puppy only in age and nature. Even in nature, she was, of course, much more mature than she had been a few months before. She had acquired a great deal of intelligence, and

a certain amount of dignity—not much, but some. But she still lived primarily for action; and when she began to mope around the house, Ben knew that something was wrong.

“Feeling a little bit off color, old girl?” he asked her. “Probably you ate something that you shouldn’t have.”

That had happened several times before, and it hadn’t been long before she had been all right again. But this time, the usual quick recovery failed to take place. Getting alarmed, Ben called a veterinary. The vet came, and looked at Skipper, lying listlessly on her blanket in a corner of Ben’s room.

“H’m,” he said. “She’s sick, all right.”

Ben stood by anxiously, answering questions and watching the veterinary’s expert fingers as he examined the dog.

“Has she been around any other dogs?” the vet asked.

“Well,” said Ben, “sometimes other dogs come into the yard.

The vet nodded. “Distemper,” he said, “and she’s a pretty sick dog.”

Ben felt his heart sink. He knew what a serious sickness distemper was. And suddenly he realized how much a part of his life Skipper had become. “Do you think she’ll—pull through?” he asked.

The veterinary didn't lift his eyes from the dog. "Maybe," he said. "Maybe not, but we'll see."

Ben felt himself getting almost angry at the calmness of the veterinary. "But isn't there something you can do?" he demanded, his voice rising.

The vet stood up, and looked at him, his eyes steady and calmly understanding. "About all I can do," he said, "is to tell you what to do. But maybe you can save the dog—if anybody can. The only real treatment for distemper is nursing, nursing and more nursing. And that's up to you."

"Oh, I'll do that, all right," said Ben, eagerly.

The vet nodded, and began giving him instructions: how to keep her comfortable, how to get her to eat, what to do when she seemed worse. "The main thing," he concluded, "is to stay on the job until it's over, one way or the other."

When he had gone, Ben sat down on the edge of his bed, and looked down at the forlorn-looking pup. With dull eyes, Skipper looked up at him, seeming to ask why she had to suffer like this?

Ben dropped on his knees, and whispered into her ear. "It's going to be all right,



Skipper. Hang on for me, old girl. I'll stand by you."

Skipper blinked, and fell into a doze.

Three days later, haggard and tired, Ben lay resting on the bed while the veterinary again examined the dog. Presently the vet stood up. "You haven't been sleeping much?" he said, smiling.

"Not much," said Ben.

"You'd better get some sleep, then," said the vet. "The pup's going to be all right."

Ben shut his eyes, and was asleep before the veterinary had left the room.



## CHAPTER III

### THE BIG DAY



## CHAPTER III

### THE BIG DAY

**J**ERRY managed to get home several times during Skipper's puppyhood, though he was never able to stay more than a few days. Every time he came, he marvelled at how much the pup had grown since his last visit. It got to be a standing joke.

"I think she's trying to grow into an elephant," he insisted, on one of his visits.

"Oh, no," Ben protested, grinning. "She just figures that I'm not going to grow much more, and it's up to her to maintain the honor of the family."

For Skipper, Jerry's visits had both their good points and their bad ones. Jerry always brought her a new ball, or a rag doll, or something else to play with; and, what was more delightful, there were usually several good sessions of exciting, rough-house playing with both Jerry and Ben participating. But, on the other hand, Jerry usually took Ben away from the house a good deal during his visits; and that meant that Skipper had to stay tied up in

the back yard by herself. She didn't care for that.

Ben was eager to have Jerry take Skipper up in the plane, but Jerry thought it unwise to take her until she was old enough to understand the necessity for keeping still. On a visit home a few weeks after Skipper recovered from distemper, however, Jerry was so much impressed by the way the dog had gained in poise and intelligence that he made a promise.

"The next time I come, I'll take her up," he said.

"Hear that, Skipper?" Ben said, gleefully. "You're on your way to living up to your name, at last."

The dog barked appreciatively, and looked up at the two brothers.

"When is next time going to be, Jerry?" Ben asked.

Jerry shrugged his shoulders. "It's hard to tell," he said. "Maybe a month, maybe six months. It all depends on what the next job turns out to be."

"Well, anyway, Skipper will be ready for her first flight," said Ben. "And if she doesn't take charge of the ship, I'll change her name."

A few days later, Jerry had gone again, and Ben and Skipper had resumed their usual rou-

tine. Ben was greatly pleased with the dog's development. Day by day, she seemed to become more and more intelligent, alert and self-dependent. No longer was she the heedless puppy of a few months ago. Now she could not only accompany Ben almost everywhere, on a leash, but she could even be trusted on the street by herself. When he had first tried letting her loose, she had run pell-mell down the street, and dashed around a corner, with Ben shouting vainly at her to come back; but now, though she still liked to dash down the street, she always returned at his call. If he didn't call, she would soon meander back on her own initiative.

"I believe you really understood about that promised flight," Ben told her one day, when he was praising her for her obedience. "You know you're going to be promoted to your full rank as Skipper, and you want me to realize that you're worthy of it."

Skipper looked up at him, eagerly, and uttered a contented noise deep down in her throat.

"Anyway," said Ben, "whether you understand all that or not, you certainly are getting to be a great dog."

He patted her on the head, and Skipper's tail wagged furiously.



“ Yes, I think you’re a pretty smart dog,” Ben went on. “ I’ll bet I could teach you something. It seems to me you’re old enough to begin getting an education.”

Later, the more he thought about it, the more this seemed like a good idea—giving Skipper an education. And so, patiently, he began teaching the dog a few simple stunts: how to play “ dead dog,” how to ask for food with a muffled, polite bark, how to shake hands. It took a good deal of patient repeating of the commands, of course; and Skipper was inclined to get confused, at first, as to what was expected of her. Yet she learned quickly, and seemed inordinately proud of her accomplishments when she began getting things right without any mistakes.

“ Say, won’t Jerry be surprised when we show him your bag of tricks? ” Ben exulted, after Skipper had put on a particularly good exhibition, one day. “ If you get much smarter, you’ll want to pilot that plane of his, to say nothing of taking a ride in it.”

Letters came from Jerry occasionally, usually containing the assurance that he hadn’t forgotten his promise. They were brief letters, with only a few hints as to what he was doing. He didn’t like to risk putting too much about his movements on paper. But

the letters came from so many different places that Ben knew Jerry must be chasing down a lot of clues in whatever case he was working on.

“ I’m being kept on the wing most of the time,” Jerry wrote, in one letter. “ This is one of the best jobs I’ve ever had. Have to keep my eyes open. Quite a crowd mixed up in it. Can’t tell yet when I’ll get through, but I’ll let you know as soon as I do.”

It had been early Spring when Jerry had been home last, and the weeks mounted into months during his absence—months in which Skipper acquired her education, and Ben waited eagerly to show the dog off to his brother. With the coming of summer, Ben didn’t have to go to school any more. He and Skipper took long hikes out into the woods and fields. Or if Ben was going to play baseball, Skipper would go along to the diamond, and then wait patiently—if a bit jealously—on the sidelines, for Ben to finish the game and get ready to go home again. She had learned that she was not permitted to take part in the game herself; and though she didn’t feel any too happy over this discrimination, she had become mindful enough of her duty to submit. And if Ben would go over to her once in a while, when some other member of his team

was at bat, and give her a few pats, it was reward enough for waiting.

At last, in midsummer, a letter came from Jerry with the long-awaited good news.

“ It looks now,” he wrote, “ as if this job would be finished in a couple of weeks, at most. I think I’ve got all the information I need to clean things up. If I have any luck, I’ll put the final touches on the job next week. Then I’ll be coming home—in a blaze of glory, I hope. I’m due for a real vacation this time—maybe a month. Is Skipper ready to fly? ”

Ben read the letter to Skipper, excitedly, in his room. “ Imagine that, Skipper,” he said. “ Asking if you are ready to fly. As if you hadn’t been ready ages ago.”

Skipper, sensing Ben’s excitement, put her front paws up in his lap, and panted eagerly. Ben ruffled the dog’s hair. “ We’ll show him how ready you are, eh, Skipper? ”

Waiting now for definite word as to just when Jerry would arrive, Ben began laying his plans for the promised month of his brother’s company. “ It will be more fun, this time,” he told the dog, “ because you are big enough to go places with us. We won’t have to leave you behind all the time, the way we did when you were just a pup. I guess you’ll like that.”

Skipper barked her assent.

“ But we’ll have to make this a bang-up reception for Jerry, when he comes,” Ben went on, planning aloud. “ I don’t suppose we can get out any brass bands, but you and I will have to make enough noise so the band won’t be missed. And you’ve got to be on your best behavior, Skipper. Remember that, or you may lose out on that flight.”

That gave him another idea. He wanted Skipper not only to behave well, but to look well. Accordingly, he gave the dog a thorough bath, and then took special pains every day afterward to keep her coat brushed as neatly as if she were going to be on exhibition at a dog show. Skipper seemed to understand that something very special was in the wind. She not only submitted patiently to all the grooming, but seemed to be even more quick than ever to respond to Ben’s every command. Ben’s pride in her grew.

“ I’ll tell you what we’ll do, Skipper,” said Ben. “ We’ll go over to the airport and meet him. As soon as he lands, we’ll run over to the plane, and since we can’t have a brass band, you bark for all you’re worth. Then I’ll shake hands with him, and then I’ll say, ‘ Shake hands, Skipper.’ And you give him your paw. Understand? ”



The dog looked up at him, trying hard to follow his headlong words. She lifted a paw, tentatively, as Ben mentioned that part of the ceremony.

“No, no, not now, Skipper,” Ben said. “I mean you’re to do it when Jerry comes.”

Skipper dropped her paw back to the ground, and looked puzzled.

“Well, we’ll rehearse it,” said Ben.

There followed daily rehearsals in the back yard. “Jerry’s coming!” Ben would shout, and then he would start to run across the yard. Skipper understood that part of it, all right, and raced after him, barking wildly. But for the first few times, the next step puzzled her. Ben would stop, stick his hand out toward a tree (which served to represent Jerry) and say a few words of greeting. Then he would turn to the waiting dog. “Shake hands, Skipper,” he would say. And Skipper would try to shake hands with him. “No, no. Shake hands with Jerry,” Ben would insist, pointing at the tree. That didn’t seem to make much sense to Skipper, but after a while she began sticking her paw out toward the tree, understanding that this was what Ben wanted her to do.

“That’s it,” said Ben, patting her, as she at last began to get it right. “You’ll under-

stand it better when the real Jerry comes. But I want you to get it right."

After a week, the ceremony seemed to go off without a hitch, and Ben was satisfied. "We'll have just one more rehearsal, Skipper," he said, "and call that enough. We should be hearing from Jerry, anyway, almost any day, that he's on his way."

They went out to the yard, and once more went through the familiar act. Just as they finished, Mrs. Brown came to the back door.

"Here's a telegram for you, Ben," she called. "I guess Jerry must be coming."

Ben rushed over eagerly, took the yellow envelope, and tore it open. "Maybe he'll be here to-day, Skipper," he yelled out, as he opened up the telegram.

Then he started to read.

"My land, boy!" said Mrs. Brown, watching him from the kitchen. "What's the matter?"

Ben dragged his eyes from the yellow sheet, and handed it to her.

It had been sent from a town in Ohio. "Your brother badly hurt in plane crash," it said. "Can you come at once?" It was signed by a doctor.

Dazedly, Ben started toward his room to pack his bag. Skipper followed him, sub-



dued and quiet. Mrs. Brown hurried out to see Mr. Brown, not knowing what else to do.

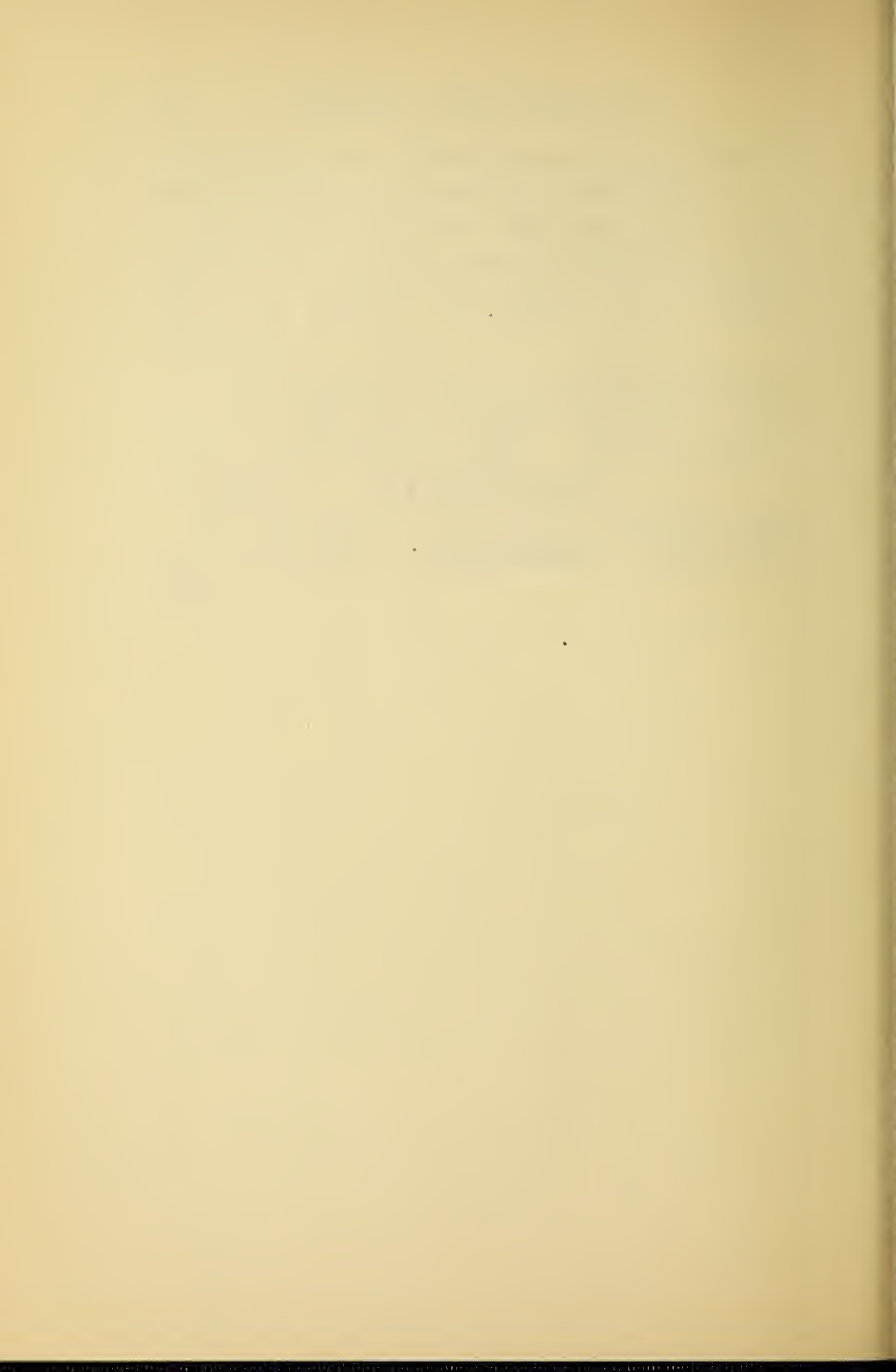
Up in his room, Ben sank down on the side of the bed, for a moment, to think things out. The dog rubbed up against him, sympathetically.

“ I guess you’ll have to wait here for me—for us,” said Ben, dropping his hand on her head. “ He’ll be all right. He’ll have to be all right.”

He went to the closet, got out a suitcase, and started packing. Skipper stuck close to his heels.

## CHAPTER IV

### JERRY'S JOB



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ALL those months during which Jerry Dillon had been sending home sketchy letters to his brother, he had been engaged in trying to track down a gang of counterfeiteurs. Who they were, he didn't know. All that he, or anyone else in the government service, knew was that for many months counterfeit bills had been cropping up in various cities all over the country. It had been easy for experts to assure themselves that the bills all came from the same source; but to discover the source was something infinitely more difficult.

Jerry, assigned to the job, found himself chasing down one blind alley after another. In city after city, where the bills had come to light, he tried to trace them back through banks, stores and various business deals, only to come up inevitably against a blank wall when some obviously innocent person would be utterly unable to hazard even a guess as to how the bills came into his possession. Investigating thoroughly every man and woman through whose hands the counterfeit bills were known

to have passed, he seemed to be getting nowhere. Often he would be in the midst of an investigation in one city, when word would come that some of the fake bills had turned up in some other city—maybe thousands of miles away. Then, hoping to strike a hotter trail, he would leave his unfinished investigation until later, and hop into his plane for a flight to the more recent scene of trouble.

He traced the movements of numerous gangs which had records of counterfeiting, often having to fly half-way across the continent to check up on some of them; but found nothing to indicate that any of them were involved in these more recent crimes. But though the trail seemed almost endless, he was fascinated by its complexities, and every new clue filled him with excitement, even though it might turn out to be as futile as all the others.

When he finally did get on the right trail, it was utterly by chance. Coming down at the airport in Cleveland, he had his plane refueled, and when he went to pay his bill, he was handed one of the counterfeit five dollar bills, among his change. He spotted it immediately, but pretended only to be slightly doubtful of its authenticity.

“ This bill looks queer,” he remarked to the attendant. “ Are you sure it’s all right? ”

The man was inclined to be scornful. "Want another one for it?" he demanded, belligerently.

"Oh, no," said Jerry. "Only I hear there have been a lot of counterfeit fives around lately. I thought this might be one. It doesn't look quite natural. Where did you get it?"

The attendant was more interested now. "That so?" he asked. "Counterfeits around? I hadn't heard about it. Let me see it."

Jerry passed him the bill, and the man examined it curiously. "Looks pretty good to me," he said.

Jerry reached for it again. "I'll take a chance on it, anyway," he said. "But where did it come from, just out of curiosity?"

"That bill? Let me see. Oh, yes, I took that in last night. Couple of fellows in a big two-seater—a nice looking job. I didn't notice the men much. I was getting an eyeful of that crate of theirs. It was sort of dark, too, when they came in. I'd never seen them before. I know that. And come to think of it, I did sort of get a hunch they were tough, but I don't know just why. Maybe it was the way they talked. One of them had a voice like a foghorn, and sort of let it come out of the corner of his mouth. But, as I say, I didn't



pay any attention to them. I couldn't even tell you what they looked like, except they were both sort of dark. And they pulled out of here the first thing this morning, before I was around. But, shucks, I guess that bill's all right. I'll swap it for you, though, if you're afraid of it."

"Oh, no; never mind," said Jerry.

"As a matter of fact," said the man, "I've got two more here that came from the same fellows. I'll send one of them over to the bank, and have them check up on it, just for fun. Are you going to be around here? I'll let you know what they say."

"Sure, I'll be here," said Jerry, who had been planning to leave at once when he came down. "I'll probably be hanging around quite a while."

He wandered around the airport, chatting casually with officials and ground men, waiting for the inevitable report to come back from the bank. Within an hour, the attendant hailed him excitedly.

"Say, you were right. That was counterfeit," he said.

Soon, as Jerry had foreseen, the whole airport was abuzz with the story. Everybody talked about the two men who had slipped in and out, leaving the bad money behind to pay

their bill. But nobody seemed to have paid much attention to what they looked like. Jerry heard half a dozen different descriptions. But as to the plane, everybody was agreed. Jerry got an excellent description of that, by listening to the various people who had seen it; and while it was not a particularly distinctive plane, he was sure he had heard enough to be able to spot it if he ever saw it again.

As to where the men had gone, nobody seemed to have any idea. They had not been at all communicative, apparently. Jerry went to a telegraph office, and sent a code telegram to headquarters, asking them to notify all airports to be on the lookout for the plane and the two men. Yet he had to admit a sneaking hope that they wouldn't be caught just yet. He wanted to do that job himself.

Late in the afternoon, when he was beginning to despair of learning any more about the two men, he received a wire from headquarters. A small airport in central Ohio had reported, according to the message, that a plane answering the description given had been seen in that territory several times in recent weeks, though it had never landed at the airport. It was thought that the plane was using some private landing field in that part of the state.

Jerry hopped into his plane and headed for the little airport. Somehow, he felt sure that he was on a real trail at last. To be sure, it seemed stupid of the counterfeiters to use the bills at an airport, when a plane is so comparatively easy to identify; but perhaps they had run short of real currency. Or perhaps their past successes had made them over-confident, and they had become careless. At any rate, they sounded like a mysterious pair—these two flyers. They would bear watching and investigating.

At the little airport in Bosterville, where the report had come from, he found that there had been a good deal of speculation about the mysterious two-seater for a long time. There were many guesses as to what the plane had been doing. It had been suspected of being a rum-runner, of being engaged in smuggling foreigners in from the Canadian border, and of being nothing more sinister than the pleasure craft of some rich man with a landing field of his own. But all that anybody knew, apparently, was that it had been seen in the air, but had never landed on the field.

Jerry again did not disclose his identity, relying for his information on the knowledge that the men at the airport would be so excited that they would be talking about nothing else

but the mysterious plane. By just appearing to be an interested visitor, he learned all that there was to learn. The main thing he had wanted to find out was in what direction the plane was usually flying, when it was seen overhead; and whether anyone flying from Bosterville had ever seen the plane, or anything that looked like it, landed anywhere in that part of the state. Nobody had, it seemed, though everybody knew which way it was usually flying. Jerry decided he would have to do some scouting.

For several days, he cruised around, searching the terrain beneath him for some sign of the plane. It was pretty discouraging work at first. But at last, on the edge of a field on what seemed to be a big, isolated farm, he saw a shed that had all the appearances of being a possible hangar. Consulting a map, he located the farm, with relation to the nearest town. Then he flew back to Bosterville. He didn't want to arouse any suspicions by flying over the farm too long.

But the next day, at dawn, he took off again, and flew straight for the farm. He hoped to be able to find a field, somewhere in the neighborhood, where he could land before the people in the farmhouse—if they were the people he was seeking—were awake. He chose a field,



a few miles away, and came down. Then, afoot, he started across country.

A couple of hours of walking brought him within sight of the farmhouse for which he was looking. To avoid being seen, however, he made a wide circle around the house, and came cautiously up toward the field from the other side. Making sure that there was nobody about, he crept close. The tracks on the field were evidence enough that it was used for a flying field, but he wanted to get a look at the plane. He edged his way toward the hangar, keeping a sharp eye out to make sure that he was not observed. Finally, he got close enough to look inside.

As he looked, he remained as silent as an Indian, but he felt like whooping with joy. This was the two-seater he had been looking for! There couldn't be any mistake. It answered the description in every detail.

Jerry beat a cautious retreat to a woodlot that he had seen about a mile away. Here, having had the foresight to bring some sandwiches and chocolate in his pockets as well as a flask of water, he settled down to wait for the day to pass. For his next step, he needed the protection of darkness.

It seemed an interminable wait, but night came at last; and Jerry made his way back to

the farmhouse. This time, he didn't bother to stop at the hangar, but stole softly up to the house itself. Several of the windows were illuminated from the lights inside, but all the curtains were pulled down. Jerry thought that significant. Farm people, he reasoned, don't pull all the curtains down.

Getting down on hands and knees, he crept along under the lighted windows. It was a warm night, and several of the windows were open, even though the curtains were pulled. As the curtains swayed lightly in the mild breeze, Jerry tried to catch a glimpse inside, but could see only small sections of a papered wall.

Then, suddenly, a door slammed, and Jerry heard footsteps inside. They were peculiarly heavy, uneven footsteps, as if the man who was walking limped heavily. Then came lighter, more regular footsteps. And as Jerry crouched under the window, straining his ears, a deep, harsh, guttural voice boomed out, almost startling him.

Quickly there flashed into Jerry's mind the way the attendant had described the voice of the man who gave him the fake bills. "A voice like a foghorn." It certainly did sound like it. Jerry listened.

"I tell you I don't like it," the voice was

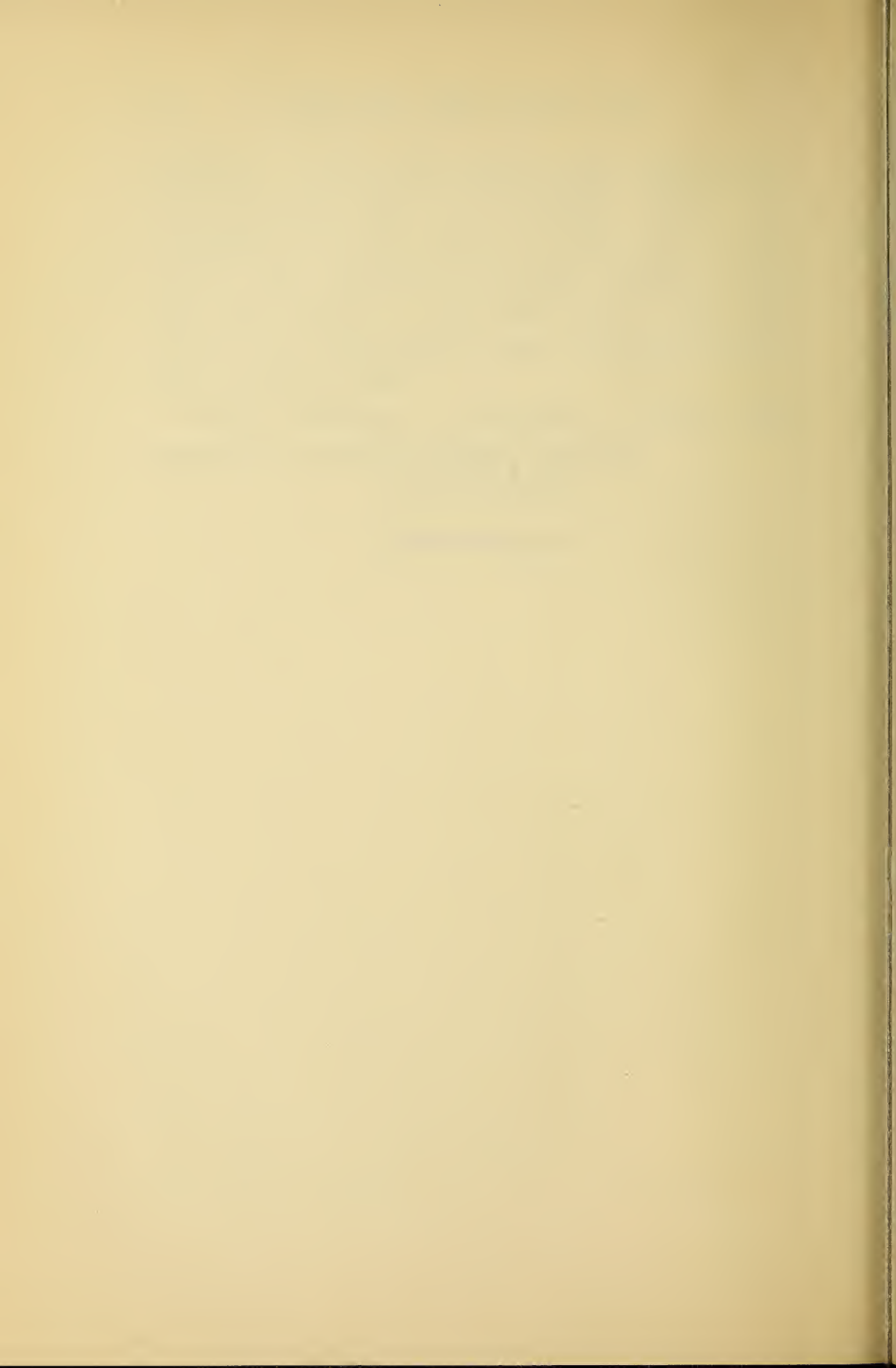


saying. "With the airports all looking for us, we're too close to Cleveland. They'll be combing this whole state for us. We never should have passed that phony dough in an airport, anyway. But now there's only one thing to do, and that's to get away from here, and get away fast."

Jerry grinned to himself. "Not fast enough," he said to himself, silently.

## CHAPTER V

### CATASTROPHE



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### CATASTROPHE

IN his assurance that he was on the right trail, Jerry had written the letter to Ben, predicting his home-coming, soon after he arrived at Bosterville. It pleased him to find that he had been quite correct in his hunch. Now all he had to do was to call in some help, and round this gang up, here in the farmhouse. He was tempted to try a single-handed capture, but decided it would be foolhardy. This was too important a case to bungle.

For the moment, the important thing to do was to stay here and listen to what the men were saying. He tried, also, to get a look at them, through the flapping curtain; but they had apparently seated themselves in a corner, and he didn't want to risk being seen, so he settled down to listen.

The man with the foghorn voice was continuing. "I say the thing to do is to get out of here, and join the other boys in Whaley City. Then we can lay low for a while."

"Other boys?" thought Jerry, listening. Maybe he had better change his plans, and let

these two lead him to the rest of the gang. Then he could round them all up at once.

But the other man was talking. His voice, in contrast to his companion's, was high-pitched and squeaky. "Sure," he was saying, with obvious sarcasm. "With our plane being hunted by every airport in the country, all we've got to do is to let somebody spot it, and then we're in the soup for fair. Why not lay low right here, and take a chance they won't locate us? It looks safer to me."

"Say, listen," said the big-voiced man. "Nobody's going to get us in the air. And we've got fuel enough to take us to Whaley City, haven't we? And we don't have to come down in any public airport, do we? We'll just light out of here, and fly high. Then we'll bring her down on that pasture we've always used, and hide her there until we can do a job of painting her over, so nobody'd recognize her. Then we'll go into Whaley City, take the ferry over to the Flats, join the boys, and take things easy for a while. What's the matter with that?"

They argued for some time, with the squeaky-voiced man obviously letting himself be convinced. And as they argued, Jerry made up his mind as to how he would act. He would let them get away from here, letting

them think they had been unobserved. Then he would follow them, at a safe distance, to Whaley City, locate the pasture where they planned to land, keep a watch there until they appeared, and then follow them to their hide-out. The capture of the whole gang would then be easy.

“ Well,” said the squeaky-voiced man, “ when do you want to start ? ”

“ To-morrow morning,” boomed the other. “ The sooner the better, I say.”

“ All right,” said his companion. “ Then let’s turn in and get some sleep.”

Jerry straightened up quickly, and tried again to peer in around the edges of the curtain as the two men started to move from the room. But all he could see was the back of one of them, and then the light clicked out. Their footsteps sounded in the darkness, as they apparently went upstairs—one stepping with a light, regular tread, the other heavily and with that irregular thump that Jerry had noticed before.

Giving up hope of getting a look at them, but sure that he knew enough of their plans to get them anyway, Jerry made his way, through the darkness, back to the field where he had left his plane. He was thoroughly tired when he got back, and he quickly made him-



self a bed of grass under the stars, thankful that the weather was fair, rolled up in a blanket and went to sleep.

The first rays of the morning sun served to set off the mental alarm clock in Jerry's head, and he opened his eyes. After blinking a couple of times, he quickly remembered why he was out here in this open field, and the important things that were ahead of him. He hopped to his feet, got some water from a nearby well for drinking and washing, breakfasted meagerly on the last of the sandwiches which he had brought with him, gave his plane a careful inspection, and then settled down to wait. His plan was not to move until he had seen his quarry take the air. Since they knew they were being sought (and undoubtedly that knowledge had been forwarded to them by their confederates who had learned of the warning sent out to the airports) it would be dangerous, he realized, to let them see him here in the neighborhood. Even though they might not know for certain that he was on their trail, they would be likely to become suspicious, and that would upset all his plans.

It was nearly two hours before Jerry heard a distant whirring, and saw the counterfeiters' plane zoom up above the farmhouse. And then, as he watched, he began to feel a little

alarm. Instead of heading directly toward the east, as he had expected, they were circling around. Were they suspicious already that somebody might be here, spying on them? Would they see his plane, down here?

His alarm increased, as they continued to circle around, and came nearer. If they were looking, they could hardly miss seeing him. And now, they seemed to be coming straight toward this field!

Jerry's mind worked fast. If they were suspicious, they would probably land, and begin asking him questions. That might lead to trouble, even though he should pretend not to have any idea who they were—which, of course, he would have to do. And he didn't want to risk any upset in his well-worked-out scheme. Quickly, he made up his mind. He would take off before they could land, and appear to be going in the opposite direction to the one they intended to take. Perhaps this would throw them off their guard, and make them assume that he had merely come down here for the night, and was now continuing westward. Later, he could turn about, and make his way to Whaley City, after they had gone.

He started his motor, jumped in, and taxied across the field. As he lifted the plane off the

ground, he noticed that the counterfeiters were flying lower, and heading straight for him. As he gained altitude, they were overhauling him fast. In a few moments, they were almost directly over him.

Suddenly a sharp, sputtering sound made itself heard above the roar of the motors. Something that sounded like a mammoth bee seemed to whiz past Jerry's ear. Involuntarily, he ducked. Then he felt the plane swerve wildly, crazily, and begin to vibrate like a man with palsy. He looked behind him, hastily. Yes, it was the propeller. Split! Split, he suddenly realized, and machine-gun bullets had done it.

The counterfeiters, apparently satisfied that if he had intended to spy on them, they had fixed him so that he couldn't, were soaring away now, and speeding into the northeast. Jerry turned his attention to the only course open to him—a forced landing. After all, he thought grimly, as he studied the field beneath him, it might have been a lot worse. One of those bullets might have gone through his head. All that was required now was a safe landing, and he could soon take up the chase again. He knew more than those counterfeiters thought he did!

Expertly, he brought the plane down. The

wheels bumped the ground, once, twice—and then, too late, Jerry saw a half-concealed gully directly ahead! In a flash, Jerry knew that this meant trouble. And almost as the realization flashed through his head, the wheels rammed into the gully, the plane seemed to whirl over his head, something seemed to strike him between the eyes like white-hot iron—and Jerry knew no more.

How long he lay unconscious, Jerry had no way of knowing. When he regained consciousness, he was aware, at first, only of a terrific headache. Vaguely, he was aware of bruises all over, but they didn't seem severe. Only the headache wracked him.

It was pitch dark. Realizing this, Jerry's aching mind fumbled with the thought that he must have been lying here in the field all day and far into the night. The details of the accident came back to him. Tentatively, he moved his arms and legs, wondering if he had broken any bones. They all seemed sound, if a trifle lame.

He sat up, and tried to peer through the darkness to see his wrecked plane. But the darkness seemed as thick as a black wall. Not even a faint star was visible above him. He held his hand directly in front of his face, moving it nearer and nearer, until it actually



touched his nose. But he couldn't see even its vaguest outlines.

A sound struck his ears—the shrill singing of a bird. What kind of a bird could that be, twittering away in this abnormal darkness? It sounded grotesque. In fact, this whole experience seemed somehow strange and unreal to him. This unyielding darkness: he had never experienced anything like it. And yet the night seemed warm. It was almost as if the sun was shining on his face and hands.

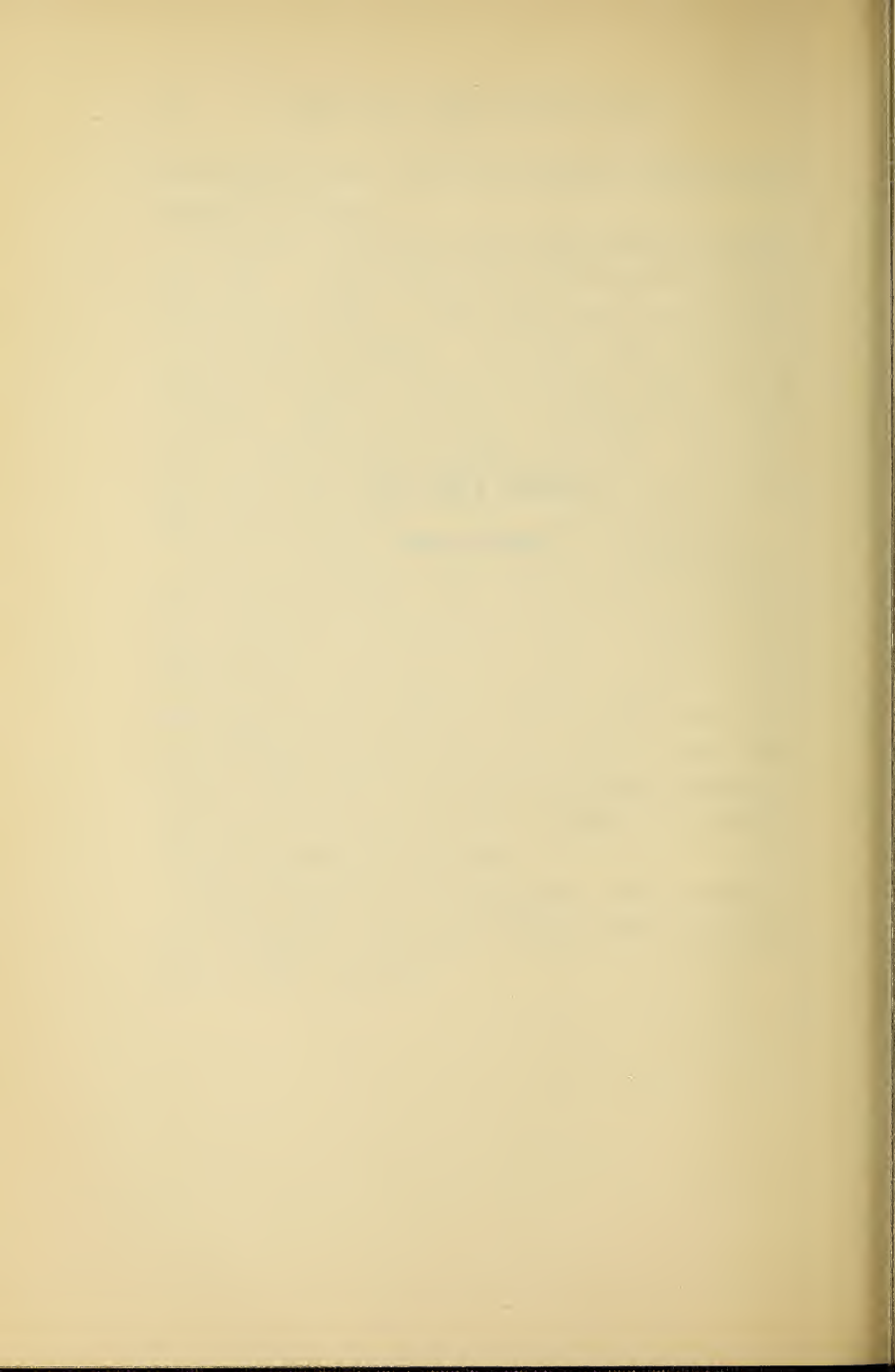
Jerry puzzled over these contradictions. Then, like a sudden clap of thunder, a terrifying thought struck his brain. Quickly he fumbled in his trousers pocket, and brought out a pack of matches. Holding the box with trembling fingers, he struck a match, and held it up. The flame warmed his fingers; then, as the match burned out, he dropped it quickly when it scorched his hand.

He fell back on the ground, with a cry of utter despair. He hadn't been able to see the flame at all! Blind!

## CHAPTER VI

### NIGHTMARE





## CHAPTER VI

### NIGHTMARE

JERRY lay still, trying to grasp the full meaning of this terrible thing that had happened to him. It just didn't seem possible. Things like this happened to other people—people you read about—but he had never even dreamed that such a thing could actually happen to him. Blind! It was too horrible. Incredible.

With the mad energy of a caged tiger, he lunged to his feet, and started walking. He had no idea where he was walking, or why. He just knew that it was impossible for him to lie there helplessly, admitting defeat. He took three or four staggering steps over the uneven field, and then his foot struck some obstruction, and he sprawled out at full length. He cried out, not at the physical pain of his fall, but at the mental agony of realizing that he was helpless.

Again he lay still for a few minutes, suffering tortures beyond anything he had ever supposed possible. But the strain of inaction was too much to be borne. Again he struggled to

his feet. He would try walking more gingerly, feeling his way along with his feet. He advanced one foot, experimentally, then the other. This method proved more successful at first. He was able to progress twelve or fifteen steps, without mishap. Of course, he had no idea where these steps were taking him, but it was better to be moving—anywhere—than lying there on the ground, giving himself up to despair. But now he walked headlong into a tree, with such a jolt that he found himself sitting down on the ground with a heavy thud. He got up and tried again, but no matter which way he turned, or how he tried to feel his way, he continually bumped into things, or tripped and stumbled, until the whole thing seemed like nothing but a terrible nightmare.

Despairing at last, he sat down on the ground, and began to shout. If only somebody would come, and get him away from this place, he thought, perhaps he would discover that it really was some sort of a nightmare. It still seemed too absurdly horrible to be true.

“Yo-o-o,” he yelled. “Help! Help!”

His voice seemed to die away in space.

He stood up, and tried again: “Yo-o-o! Help! Help!”

The alarmed twittering of the birds was his only reply.

The hopelessness of his situation came home to him anew. He had chosen this field partly because it was so secluded. It had seemed like an excellent place to be unobserved. The nearest house was at least a mile away, and he had seen no signs of activity yesterday anywhere around. And now that he needed help, the chances were all against him.

Again he started stumbling around, alternately falling down, bumping into trees, and shouting. It seemed as if he kept this up for hours, though actually it probably lasted less than half an hour. Then, stumbling again, he fell forward, and his hand grasped out at something metallic. The plane! He seized it eagerly. Here, at least, was something familiar to his touch. It was no good to him now, even if the crash hadn't thoroughly wrecked it; yet it seemed like an old friend. He felt his way around it, trying to ascertain how badly it had been damaged. It seemed to lie like a crippled bird, on one crumpled wing. It was, he decided, nearly—if not entirely—beyond repair.

This thought added to his depression, and after another series of rather hopeless shouts, he sat down beside the wrecked plane, beaten.

What was the use? Should he sit here and starve to death, waiting for somebody to find

him? The way he felt, he thought he would go crazy from despair before that could happen. And what if he did finally succeed in attracting somebody's attention, and getting taken away from here? What then? Endless days and months and years of this hopelessness?

A weird mirthless howl of laughter came out of his throat, as though he were already losing his sanity. Then the howl changed to a shriek of misery. He stretched out on his stomach, burying his face in the grass; and his body shook with great sobs.

Then he sat up, and his sightless face had become set in a grim line. He took his revolver out of his pocket, and felt it all over—felt the cartridges in the magazine, felt the end of the barrel, and the trigger. Then he sat, toying with the dangerous weapon in his hands.

He thought of Ben. If only there were some way to say good-bye to Ben. Even now, he supposed, Ben was waiting for the message saying that he was on his way home. Waiting for that long-promised flight for Skipper. Poor Ben! It wouldn't be easy for him, left to fight the world's battles alone—just he and Skipper. Jerry breathed a little prayer for his brother's protection.



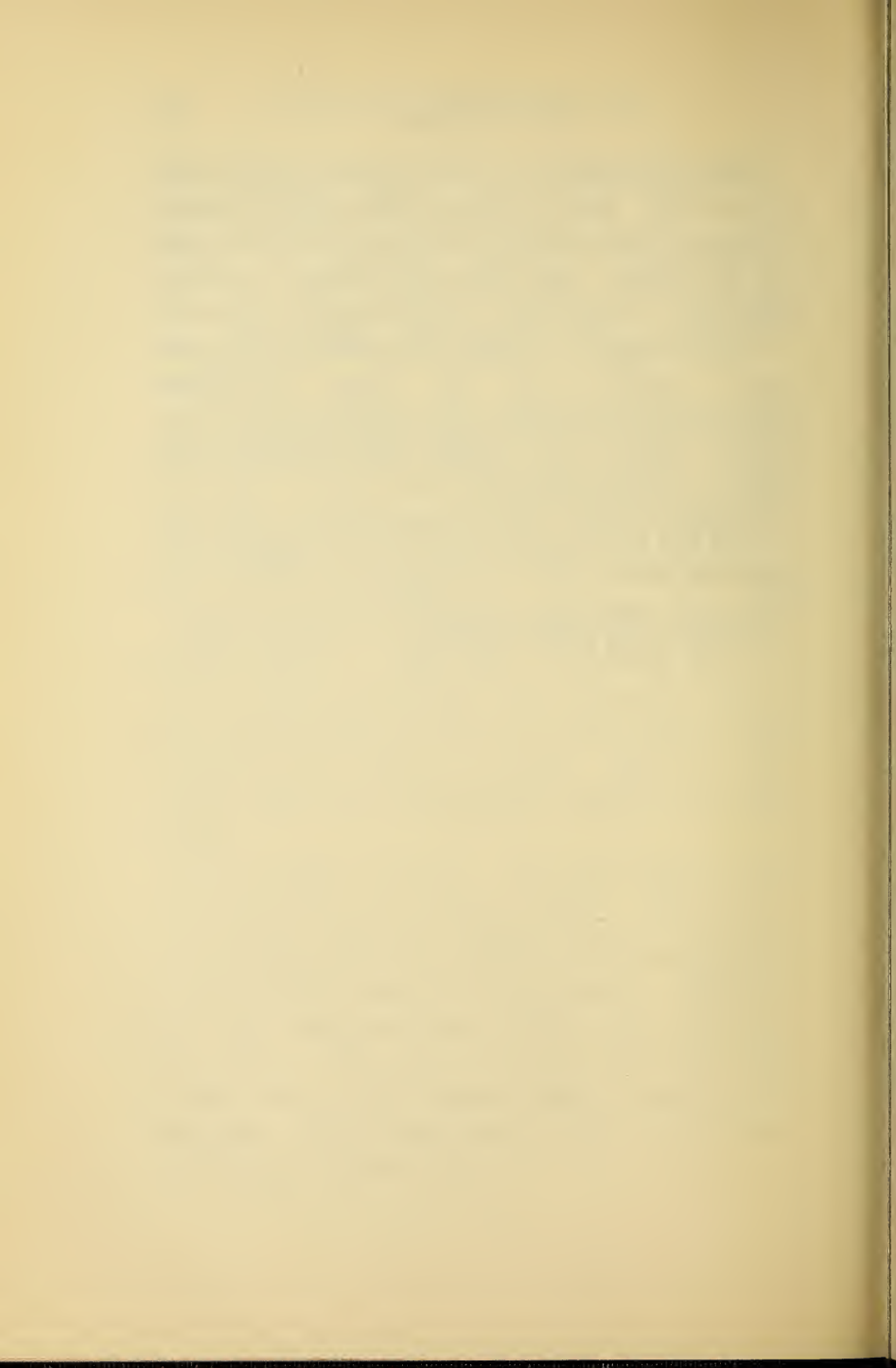
Then he lifted the revolver slowly to the side of his head. For a moment, he poised it there, wondering if he were a coward, afraid to fight out his fight. But the odds seemed so overwhelming. He took a deep breath, and ——

“ Hey, there! ” somebody yelled, almost directly behind him. As Jerry hesitated, startled, the revolver was yanked out of his hand. He sat up, rigidly, his sightless eyes staring straight ahead.

“ What’s the matter here? ” the voice demanded, now over at his side. “ What —— Why, you can’t see, can you? ”

“ No,” said Jerry, soberly. “ I can’t see.”





## CHAPTER VII

### THE VERDICT



## CHAPTER VII

### THE VERDICT

“**S**AY, that’s a miserable shame,” said Jerry’s rescuer. “You just let me help you over to the house. My name’s Reynolds, and I live in the farmhouse just over yonder. I heard you shouting, as I was working over in the next field.”

He took Jerry’s arm, and started walking. “Just take it easy now,” he said. “You must be pretty well used up.”

“I suppose you want to know how I happened to be trying to land here in your field,” said Jerry.

“Now, now,” said Mr. Reynolds, “don’t you be worrying your head about that now. The first thing is to get you fixed up. Maybe you aren’t so badly off as you think. Probably the doctors will fix you up as good as new—your eyes and everything.”

As he spoke, Jerry found himself getting new hope. Now that he was no longer so hopelessly alone, he began to wonder why he had felt so sure that his blindness was beyond cure.

And even in spite of his blindness, he felt quite normal again. He couldn't see, to be sure, but otherwise he was unchanged. His legs and his arms worked just as usual. His mind worked just as usual. Even if he didn't recover his sight, he suddenly decided, he would get along all right. He would be himself, just the same. He wouldn't let this mishap ruin his life.

"I'm glad you stopped me from—from shooting, Mr. Reynolds," he said. "I just felt licked, for the moment. But that's over. I'm going to be all right. You don't need to worry about my trying that again."

"That's the talk," said the farmer, guiding him along a path toward the farmhouse. "We'll just let Mrs. Reynolds make you comfortable in the house. Then we'll get the doctor over here, and see what's to be done."

They arrived at the farmhouse, and the farmer quickly explained to his wife what had happened. With motherly concern, Mrs. Reynolds insisted on putting Jerry to bed, though he protested that aside from being unable to see, he was quite all right. Still, after he had allowed himself to be piloted upstairs, and guided to the bed, he sank back on it with a feeling of profound relief.

Mrs. Reynolds brought him fresh milk and toast, while her husband unlaced and pulled

off his boots, and then went to telephone for the doctor. While they waited for him to come, either the farmer or his wife stayed constantly by Jerry's bedside.

"Just so you won't feel lonesome," Mrs. Reynolds explained. "But don't you try to talk and tire yourself all out. You just lie back and rest."

Jerry found himself feeling immensely grateful for these kind people. Things didn't seem half so bad now. Within him, the hope kept growing that his blindness would prove only temporary: it became almost a conviction that he would soon grope his way out of this darkness which had fallen around him. With this new hope giving him relief from his mental anguish, he dropped asleep, peacefully.

He woke up to hear Mrs. Reynolds say: "Here's Dr. Murdock."

Instinctively, he tried to look at the new arrival, then realized that he couldn't. He heard a chair pushed up alongside the bed, and felt the doctor's hand on his pulse.

"Had a crack-up, did you?" said the doctor; then, before Jerry could answer, stuck a thermometer under his tongue.

"H'mm," said the doctor, as he pulled the thermometer out. "Well, tell me how it happened. Are you one of those fellows that have



been flying around here lately, and living over on the old Sawyer farm? ”

“ No,” said Jerry, “ but they were the reason I came here—and the reason why I’m lying on this bed now.” And he told the story of what had happened. “ If you’ll send a message for me,” he added, “ somebody else can pick them up in Whaley City.”

“ I should say so,” said the doctor, who had been ejaculating with amazement throughout Jerry’s recital of events. “ But first, let’s see if we can find out a little more about what’s happened to you. You say you can’t see anything—not even light? ”

“ No, nothing,” said Jerry. “ Do you suppose I’m going to be blind—always? ”

“ I wouldn’t want to say,” said the doctor. “ We’ll have to have a specialist look you over. But first, let’s see if there’s anything else wrong.”

He got Jerry undressed, and looked him all over, asking dozens of questions. Then, finally, “ Aside from the nervous shock, and a few superficial bruises, I can’t see that there’s a thing the matter with you, except your eyesight. If you feel up to it, I’ll take you right along with me now, and we’ll go over to the hospital at Bosterville.”

Jerry agreed, and after the doctor had

helped him put his clothes back on, he thanked the farmer and his wife, and allowed the doctor to guide him out to his automobile. The doctor went back into the house long enough to telephone to the hospital, and then rejoined him, and they started. A couple of hours later, they were at the hospital.

Jerry felt himself being helped out of the car, and up the steps into the hospital. Strange voices buzzed around him in the darkness. Dr. Murdock's voice. The voices of nurses. Internes. Then another voice, labelled "Dr. Smithson." This voice came from the eye specialist.

"There's a table here," said Dr. Smithson's voice, addressing itself to Jerry, as he was guided into a hospital room. "I want you to lie down on it, while I look you over."

Jerry felt the table with his outstretched hands, lifted himself onto it, and lay down. The voices still buzzed over him, but chiefly Dr. Smithson's voice now, asking questions. Even though he couldn't see, Jerry pictured the doctor leaning over him, a metallic, shiny disc protruding like a visor from his forehead, studying his eyes, asking questions, dictating notations to a nurse at his side.

Finally, Dr. Smithson laid a hand quietly on Jerry's shoulder. "Well," he said, "I

guess that's enough for now. I want you to go to bed now, and get a good rest."

"Doctor," said Jerry, "I'll—my eyes—they'll get better, won't they?"

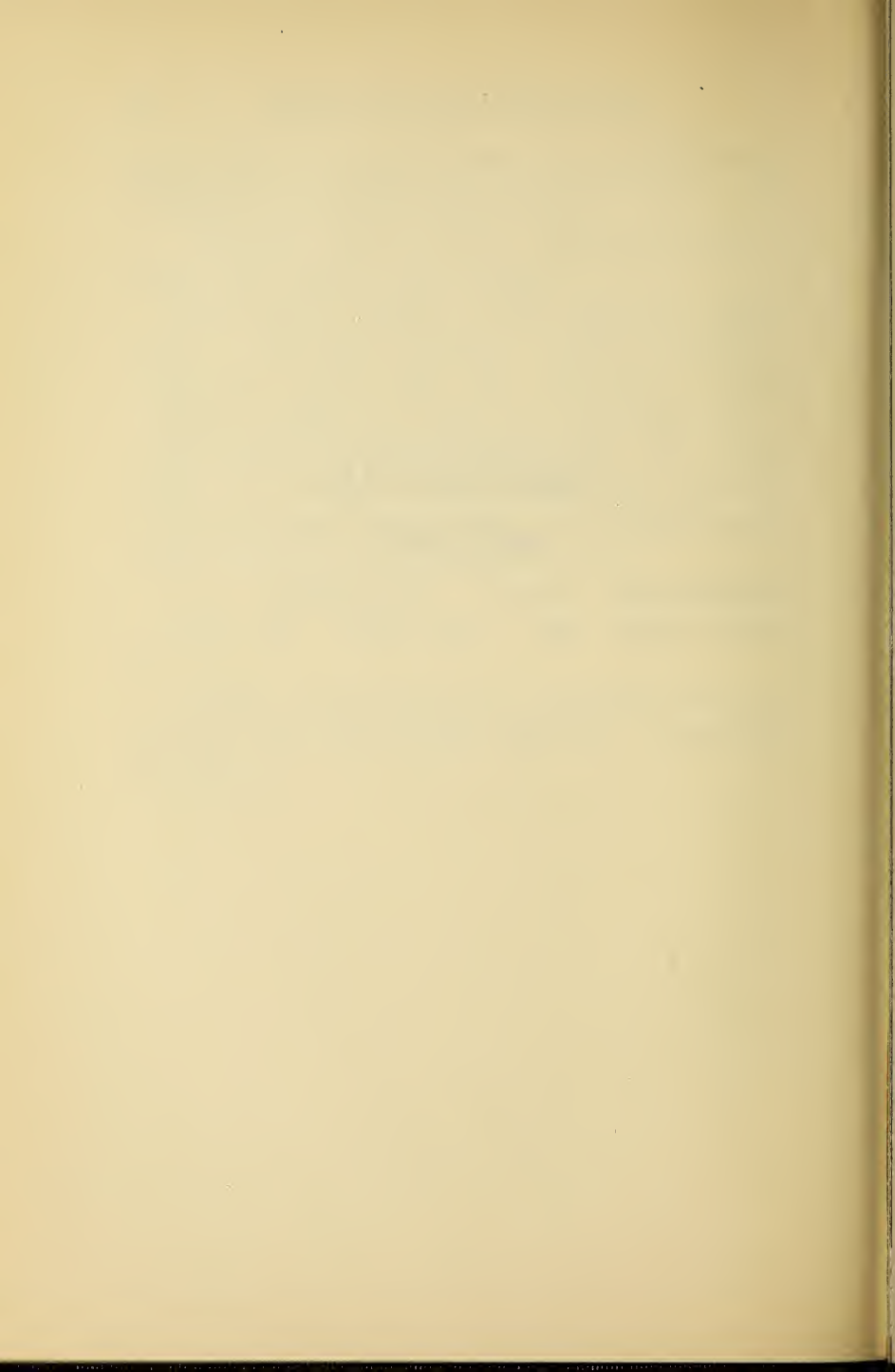
The doctor's grasp on his shoulder tightened. "My boy," he said, "I wish you hadn't asked me that, just yet. There's a faint chance I might be wrong. It might be a nervous condition. But I can't give you false hope. It looks to me as if that blow on your head paralyzed your retina. I'm afraid you'd better make up your mind to ——"

"I understand," Jerry interrupted. "Well—all right—I'll get along—even if ——"

"Send a telegram to my brother, will you, please?" he interrupted himself. "Ask him to come."

## CHAPTER VIII

### HOME AGAIN



## CHAPTER VIII

### HOME AGAIN

**J**ERRY was sitting out on the sun porch of the hospital, his unseeing eyes staring straight ahead.

“ Jerry! ” said Ben, rushing forward.

Jerry stood up eagerly, and stretched out his hands. “ Ben! ” he said.

Ben felt the tears coming in his eyes, but he struggled to keep his voice under control, as he grasped Jerry’s hands. “ You—you look fine, Jerry,” he said, trying to sound cheerful.

Jerry smiled faintly. “ Thanks, old man,” he said. “ I guess I’m going to be all right—except for —— ” He motioned vaguely toward his face. “ You knew about—what had happened? ”

“ Yes,” said Ben. “ I talked with Dr. Smithson before I came up. But don’t you let it worry you, Jerry. Dr. Smithson said you could come on home with me, and I’ll—I’ll do the seeing for both of us. Now tell me all about how it happened, won’t you? ”

Jerry went over the whole story, omitting only the terrible despondency that had come



upon him when he discovered his blindness, and his attempt to shoot himself. He summed up all that by saying: "It made me feel pretty low, until Mr. Reynolds heard me shouting, and found me."

"But the counterfeiters, Jerry," said Ben, excitedly. "Did they get caught in Whaley City?"

"I don't know yet," said Jerry. "I haven't heard. I sent word about it, and got a wire back saying the boys would be waiting to nab them, but that's the last I've heard. Maybe they got wary, after their joust with me, and changed their plans."

"Scoundrels!" said Ben. "If your crowd doesn't get them, I'll go after them myself. They aren't going to get away with this."

Jerry smiled again. "I guess they'll get them," he said.

The next day, the brothers were on a train, bound for Mountville. Ben tried his best to keep up a light-hearted conversation, but Jerry seemed to have lost some of the high spirits he had shown the day before. Most of the time, on the train, he just sat in his seat, with his head bowed, answering Ben's questions only in monosyllables, if at all. Toward the end of the ride, however, he broke a long silence.

“ Listen, Ben,” he said, “ I want to ask you a favor.”

“ Anything,” said Ben.

“ That’s easy to say,” said Jerry, and his voice sounded strangely sour. “ But what I want to ask you to do is not to try to do too much for me. I don’t want to live as if I was in a hospital all the rest of my life—having somebody dress me and undress me and brush my hair and my teeth and wash my face. I’m getting sort of tired of having people act as if I was a hopeless cripple. Just because I can’t see, that doesn’t mean that I can’t do anything at all.”

“ All right, Jerry. I’ll try to remember,” Ben said.

But it was hard, when they got home, to see Jerry stumbling around, getting angry at himself because of his fumbling and falling. Still Ben kept himself from offering help except when he felt sure Jerry would welcome it.

As the days passed, however, this system didn’t seem to be working out very well. Ben had done everything he could think of to make it easier for Jerry to help himself. He had even sent Skipper to visit with some friends, for fear the dog might get under Jerry’s feet and bother him. But still Jerry, instead of regaining his old carefree manner, seemed to be

getting more irritable and despondent every day. If Ben offered to help him, he barked at him; and if he didn't offer, Jerry accused him of being selfish. The old Jerry seemed to have been transformed by his misfortune into a peevish, nervous grouch.

Ben excused his brother in his mind. But if there were only something he could do to help—some way to give Jerry a substitute for eyes, so that he would be himself again!

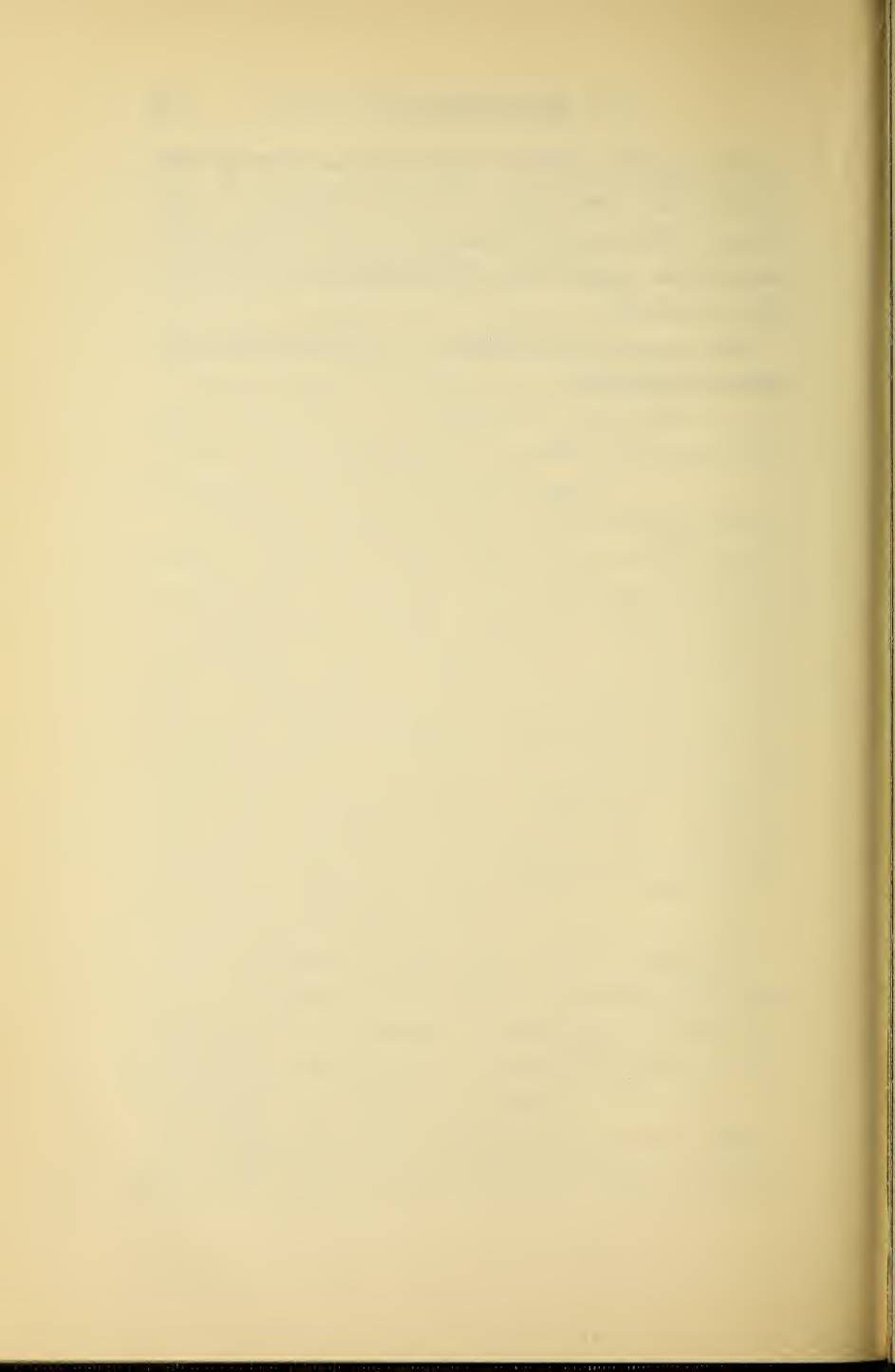
And then, one day, as he was walking on the street, Ben met a man with a dog—a dog much like Skipper. The man, Ben realized, vaguely, was blind; but for the moment he didn't think much about this. There was an institution, over in this part of the town, where dogs were trained to lead the blind; and Ben had become accustomed, in years past, to seeing blind men with dogs walking along the street, coming from the school, or returning to it. But he had never thought much about it—had taken no particular interest in it.

As he passed by this man with his dog, however, a thought struck him. Maybe this was the help Jerry needed to readjust himself to the world around him! Maybe Skipper could be Jerry's substitute for eyes!

He turned, and watched this other blind man walk confidently down the street, holding

to the handle of the dog's harness with one hand, and grasping his cane lightly in the other. The man seemed as unconcerned as though he could see everything as plainly as Ben himself.

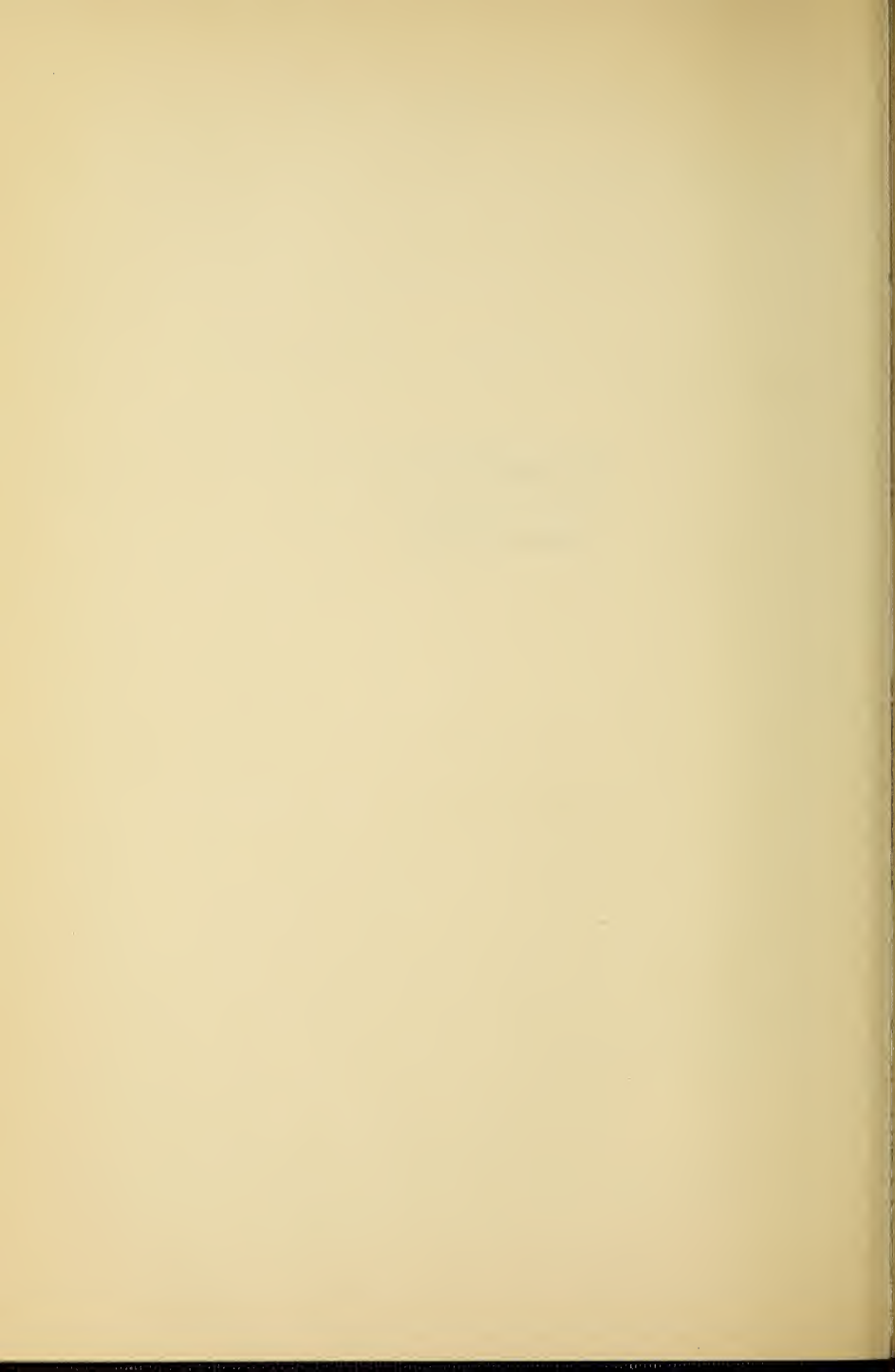
Ben snapped his fingers. "I'll find out," he said to himself.



## CHAPTER IX

### THE SACRIFICE





## CHAPTER IX

### THE SACRIFICE

**B**EN said nothing to Jerry about the idea that had come to him. He didn't want to raise any hopes that might later be dashed, nor did he want to risk Jerry's objections in advance. In Jerry's present state of mind, he never knew what attitude his brother would take on any suggestion made to him. If Jerry happened to be feeling especially discouraged, he didn't seem to want to do anything but sit in a chair and be gloomy. Yet Ben was sure that if he could only be given the lift that the dogs seem to give to these other blind men, his whole outlook would be changed.

The first thing next morning, Ben presented himself at the institution, on the outskirts of the town, and asked for the manager. He was invited into a large office, where a man with a pleasantly serious face sat behind a large desk, with a dog lying in the corner behind him. The man arose and shook hands with Ben. His name was Mr. Gruening. The dog arose, too, but Mr. Gruening waved her back, and she resumed her place on the floor.

Ben quickly stated his business. His brother, he explained, had recently been blinded; and he would like to have his dog, Skipper, trained to guide the blind brother.

"Well," said Mr. Gruening, "we'll have to know a little more than that before we can decide anything."

He began asking questions, explaining the reasons for the questions as he went along. The dogs they had found most satisfactory for this work, he explained, were German shepherds (police dogs), females, and preferably about fifteen months old. Skipper seemed to qualify on all these counts.

"But I'm afraid," said Mr. Gruening, "that if this dog grew up with your brother and you, she wouldn't do. She would be so used to your brother that we would have trouble training her to a new point of view, getting her to understand that she must be his protector."

"She grew up with me," Ben said. "But my brother has only seen her a few times. He has been away most of the time since he brought her home to me, as a pup."

"Oh," said Mr. Gruening. "Then that might be all right. But of course, we would have to see the dog, and observe her before we would know whether or not she could be

trained for this work. She would have to be put on trial, you might say."

"That's all right," said Ben, eagerly. "I could bring her around, any time. And I'm sure you'd find her a good dog for the job. She's very smart." And he told of the things he had taught Skipper, and how quickly she learned.

Mr. Gruening nodded. "I'd have to talk with your brother, too," he said, "before I could tell you absolutely whether or not we could undertake to train a dog for him. I gather from what you say that he is the sort who would know how to appreciate a dog, and understand it. That's very important. Anyway, I should want to talk the matter over with him, and get an idea as to how well he would be able to coördinate with the dog."

Again Ben assured him that these requirements could be met. "Only, I'd rather not say anything about it to him unless you think there's a good chance we can put it through," he said.

"From what you say, I believe there is a very good chance," said Mr. Gruening. "But there's just one more point. This dog has always been very much your dog, hasn't she?"

Ben nodded.

"You've brought her up from puppyhood,

trained her, played with her, practically lived with her? ”

“ Yes,” said Ben.

“ You are pretty fond of her, aren’t you? ”

“ Of course,” Ben agreed.

Mr. Gruening tapped on his desk with his pencil. “ When we train a dog to be a guide for a blind man,” he said, “ we have to wean that dog’s affections away from all past friends, no matter how close, and center her whole life on her new master. She must live only for that one man. If we trained your dog to be your brother’s guide, could you give her up to him entirely? ”

Ben swallowed heavily. “ You mean I couldn’t be her—her friend, any more? ”

“ Her friend, of course,” said Mr. Gruening. “ But only that. She could not be an inseparable part of your life, as she has been in the past. For you to allow her to continue on the same basis as before would be to ruin her usefulness to your brother. You could speak to her, give her a friendly pat now and then, act toward her, in a word, as you would toward any other person’s dog. But she could not be your playmate and companion as before. That might turn her mind and heart away from her job—which must be above everything else.”



"Yes, I can see that," said Ben, soberly.

"It's quite a sacrifice," Mr. Gruening suggested.

"Yes, it is," said Ben. "She has been a great pal, and it certainly would be hard to have to give that up." He paused, thinking.

"Well?" said Mr. Gruening, after a few moments.

"Oh!" said Ben, coming back from his thoughts. "It will be all right. Of course, it will be all right. I'll give her up—for Jerry."

Mr. Gruening's pleasant, sober face lit up in a brief and friendly smile. He arose, and reached out his hand toward Ben's. "Good for you," he said. "I hope we can work it out, so you will feel repaid for your generosity. Can you bring the dog around this afternoon? We'll look her over."

Ben agreed, and hurried back to see if there was anything he could do for Jerry. He found his brother sitting in his usual chair. The radio was going, but Jerry didn't seem to be listening. His face looked as if he were thinking of his trouble. Ben said nothing about his negotiations with Mr. Gruening. He had decided to wait until it seemed certain that the plan could be carried through.

"Let's go for a walk, Jerry," he suggested.

"Oh, you don't want to drag me around,"



Jerry replied. "I'm just an anchor. You go ahead and have a good time."

"Don't be like that, Jerry," Ben pleaded. "You know I like to walk with you."

"All right." But Jerry got up without enthusiasm, and allowed Ben to take his arm. Ben knew that it hurt his pride to feel so thoroughly dependent on anybody—even Ben. They walked down the street and through the park, and Ben told Jerry of the various people they met. But Jerry didn't seem much interested. After a while they went home to lunch.

"I'm going over to see Skipper this afternoon," said Ben, casually.

"Why don't you bring her home?" Jerry asked, dispiritedly. "She'd be a lot better company for you than I am. And she wouldn't bother me. I can get along, somehow."

"Well, maybe I will, a little later on," said Ben.

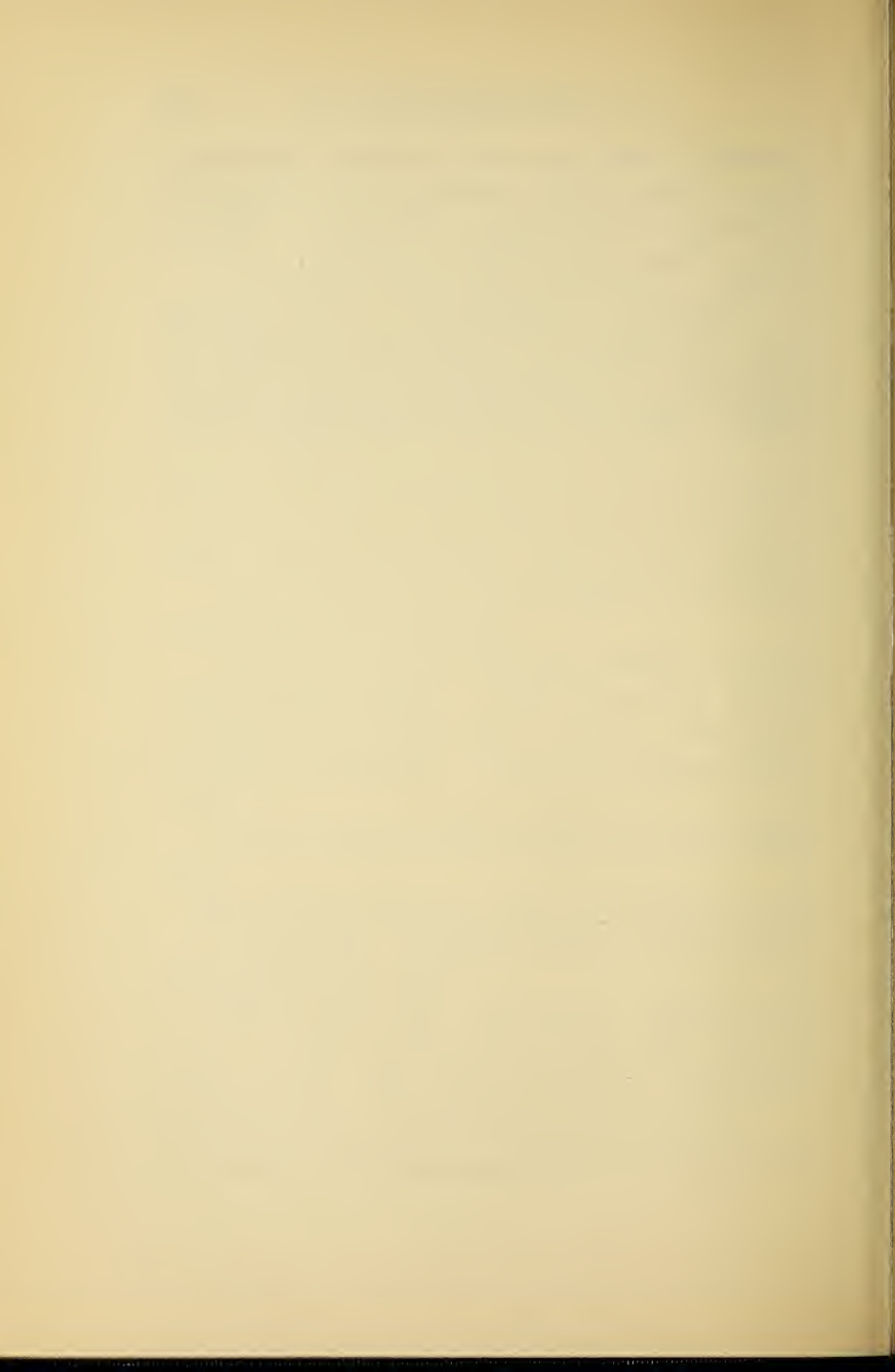
The meeting between Ben and Skipper was a rousing one. Skipper jumped up on him, delighted to see him.

"Good old girl," said Ben, rubbing her head. "But you'll have to get over all this sort of thing. You've got to help me, Skipper. And to help me, you've got to give me up."

Skipper, not understanding in the least, but

realizing that Ben was talking seriously, barked importantly. Ben grinned, and patted her head. "All right," he said. "Come along. I'm going to take you to school."

"Thanks for keeping her for me," he called out to his friends, to whom he had explained his plans. Then he started out briskly for the school. Skipper trotted dutifully at his heels.



## CHAPTER X

### ENTRANCE EXAMINATION



## CHAPTER X

### ENTRANCE EXAMINATION

“**W**HAT’S the verdict?” Ben asked, eagerly.

Mr. Gruening smiled his grave, friendly smile. Skipper had been at the school several days, “taking her entrance exams,” as Mr. Gruening expressed it.

“One of the smartest dogs we’ve ever had here,” he said now; and Ben’s face lit up. “Yes, sir,” he went on, “she’ll be a star pupil, or I miss my guess.

“You know,” he continued, “a lot of people talk about training dogs. But when it comes to the kind of work our dogs have to learn, it takes more than training. It takes an education. The dog doesn’t only have to learn to do certain things at certain times. That’s mechanical. But these dogs have to learn to use their own intelligences. They have to know when to disobey, as well as when to obey. After all, they can see, and their blind masters can’t. If the master tells them to lead somewhere, and they can see that it would be dangerous, they have to be independent enough to



refuse. That means that they have to have brains to start with—not merely the ability to learn a few mechanical actions. And this dog of yours has the brains. She's proved it, to my satisfaction."

"Say, that's great," said Ben.

"Yes," said Mr. Gruening, "as far as the dog is concerned, things will work out all right. I'm sure of that. But before we go any farther, we'll have to have a conference with your brother. Have you said anything yet to him about all this?"

"No," said Ben. "Not yet."

"Could you bring him to see me this afternoon?"

Ben agreed to do so. He wanted very much to ask if he might see Skipper; but he realized that this might make Mr. Gruening think that he was weakening in his determination to give the dog up to Jerry. So he thanked him, and went on home.

Jerry was in even a blacker mood than usual, when Ben got home. He had been outdoors, trying doggedly to prove to himself that he didn't need to rely on anybody to guide him around. But he had only succeeded in stepping violently off a curb, and twisting his ankle. Some passers-by had helped him back into the house, and he was sitting in his chair,

despondent and out of sorts, with his ankle propped up on a stool.

"I wish I'd been killed when that plane cracked up," he told Ben, bitterly. "What's the use of going on living like this—of no use to yourself or anyone else?"

"Jerry," said Ben, "how would you like it if you could go around wherever you wanted to go, without having to depend on anybody else to take you?"

"What are you trying to do?" Jerry demanded, sourly. "Are you trying to rub it in?"

"You know I'm not," said Ben. "Jerry, do you remember seeing the police dogs that are always guiding blind men around town here?"

Jerry's face grew thoughtful. "Say!" he said. "I never thought of that."

"How would you like to have one of those dogs?" Ben demanded. "How would you like to have Skipper for your guide?"

"I wonder," said Jerry. "Do you suppose a dog is really much help?"

"Of course," said Ben. "A dog is better than a man as a guide, they tell me. It's almost like having your own sight back."

Jerry seemed definitely hopeful, and yet not entirely convinced. "I suppose it's worth

trying," he said. "Anything is worth trying. But I don't know how it would work out."

"Of course it will work out," Ben assured him.

"But Skipper is your dog," Jerry objected. "I hardly know her, and she hardly knows me. What makes you think she would do the job for me, or that she could, even if she wanted to?"

"She used to be my dog," Ben corrected him. "But now she's going to be your dog. I'm giving her back to you. And the reason I know she can do the job is because I have found out all about it, at the school. She's out there right now; and this afternoon you and I are going out to talk with Mr. Gruening, the manager."

Jerry smiled for the first time in days. "You're a swell brother, Ben," he said.

Ben wondered if he should warn Jerry that the plan might yet fail—that it all depended on Mr. Gruening's decision after talking with him. But seeing Jerry cheerful again, he couldn't bring himself to say anything which might turn him back to gloom. And besides, he was confident that Mr. Gruening would accept Jerry as a pupil. Certainly Jerry was the type who would appreciate and understand a dog, and be able to attune himself to the dog.

That, as Ben understood it, was the main requirement.

Nevertheless, he was on tenterhooks as, arm in arm with Jerry, he set out that afternoon for the school. Jerry seemed so hopeful now, so cheerful, so much like the old Jerry. How terrible it would be if this new hope should be dashed! Ben kept up a running fire of conversation so that Jerry would not suspect his nervousness.

The meeting with Mr. Gruening, however, banished all his fears. Jerry liked the quiet-spoken manager at once, because he talked with him in matter-of-fact, man-to-man fashion, not assuming the patronizing, sympathetic manner that made Jerry so acutely conscious of his blindness. Mr. Gruening merely asked a few questions, and then began discussing dogs—his favorite subject. Jerry's interest in the subject, and the attitude that he showed as he talked about dogs, obviously convinced Mr. Gruening that he was the sort of person whom a dog would be delighted to serve.

"You would like us to go ahead and train this dog for you?" Mr. Gruening asked, at last. Ben sighed with relief, realizing that the question would not have been asked unless Mr. Gruening had been satisfied to go ahead.

"I certainly would," said Jerry.



“And you will come here and let us train you, too? You know this is a partnership proposition, and the man as well as the dog has to learn the ropes.”

“Yes, sir,” said Jerry.

“Good,” said Mr. Gruening. “We’ll start with the dog right away. And incidentally, it’s pretty fine of your brother to give her up. I’ve explained to him that the dog must be entirely yours from the time we turn her over to you. I imagine it’s quite a sacrifice.”

Jerry nodded, soberly.

“Oh, that’s all right,” Ben put in, hastily. “The only thing is that I’ll envy Skipper her job. But I know she can do it better than I can, so it’s up to her.”

“We’ll need a couple of months to work with the dog,” Mr. Gruening said, turning again to Jerry. “Then we’ll be ready for you. We’ll want you to stay here another month, working with the dog under our supervision. Then you can strike out for yourself.”

“I shall get pretty impatient, waiting, I expect,” said Jerry.

“Yes,” said Mr. Gruening, “but I’m sure you will feel well rewarded in the end. I wish our vice president, Captain Blunt, were here. I should like to have you talk with him. He has used a dog for years, and could tell you

what it has meant to him. Unfortunately, he is away on a lecture tour at present; but he will be here when you come for your training. You will find him a delightful companion."

"You mean he is blind, too?" asked Jerry.

"Yes," said Mr. Gruening.

"And he's out on a lecture tour, with only his dog?"

Mr. Gruening smiled. "Yes, indeed," he said. "He goes everywhere—on trains, steamboats, trolley cars, afoot. In fact, he gets about a lot better than some people who can see, because he uses his own head and the dog's, too."

Jerry shook his head, wonderingly.

"You'll be able to do that, too, Jerry," said Ben.

"It's pretty hard to imagine, all at once," said Jerry. "It seems too good to be true."

They made their final arrangements with Mr. Gruening, setting the date when Jerry would come back for his training.

Jerry whistled a little tune, as he walked home, holding Ben's arm.





## CHAPTER XI

### SKIPPER'S EDUCATION



## CHAPTER XI

### SKIPPER'S EDUCATION

NOW Skipper's education began. It was rather confusing to her at first; but soon she began to get into the spirit of it, and found each day's new tasks interesting and challenging to her pride of accomplishment. Mr. Gruening and his two young assistants, Joe and Benedict, were very patient, and appreciative of her desire to learn. They seemed so pleased when she showed progress, and were so considerate when she failed to understand at once what was wanted of her, that Skipper found it a delight to work with them.

They fitted her out with a harness—a simple enough affair, running over her shoulders. Attached to the harness was a leash, and also the U-shaped handle for a blind man to hold. Since this handle was rigid, with the ends of the U attached at either side of the dog's shoulders, every sidewise motion of the dog would be instantly noticeable to the man holding it.

During Skipper's early training, of course, only Mr. Gruening, Joe and Benedict held the

handle. The first thing was to make her understand the three commands that would later be used: Forward, Left and Right. This, like all the rest of her education, was taught by sheer patience. Time after time, her instructors would repeat the words, and then indicate what she was expected to do. Then they began to give her the commands, and leave it to her to follow them. If they said, "Left," and she turned right, there were no reproaches—merely another patient round of training.

There were times, of course, when Skipper lost interest in her work, and then her trainers would be displeased with her. The punishment, however, would take the form of a scolding rather than any physical retribution; and Skipper soon came to be so anxious to avoid hearing that displeased tone of voice that she seldom incurred it.

After she had mastered the meaning of the three commands, so that she was letter perfect, her trainers began taking her out into traffic. This was the more difficult part of the training. By the same patience with which she was taught the first principles, she had to be given the idea that it was her responsibility to guide the man with her safely through all sorts of traffic conditions. She had to be taught always

to walk along the edge of the curb, with her escort inside. She had to learn to stop and sit down when she reached a street crossing, or any other obstruction, so that the man she was guiding would know that something unusual was ahead. She had to be taught, above all, that she was to use the greatest caution in crossing streets—never moving forward until the traffic would permit, and even then keeping in mind that the man holding the handle was in her care. She had to be taught to sit down, also, when she came to steps, and always to stop with her head directly under a door-knob when she came to a door through which she and her charge were to pass.

Gradually, the understanding came to her that when somebody had hold of that handle on her harness, she was responsible for his safety. And when she began to show evidences of this understanding, Mr. Gruening smiled, patted her, and said to Benedict, "Well, I guess she's ready for the big show. Do you want to take her out?"

"Sure," said Benedict, nonchalantly.

Already, Skipper had been guiding her trainers through normal traffic, and had acquired the idea that she was not to let them be run down by automobiles. But though you never can be sure what motorists are going to



do, most of them will slow down and even stop when they see a dog leading a man across the street. When Mr. Gruening spoke of the "big show" he meant that Skipper must now be taught that there are motorists who fail to be so considerate—that she must be prepared for emergencies.

Accordingly, he now took out his car, while Benedict walked down to the road with Skipper. Presently, as the dog and trainer started to cross the road, Mr. Gruening bore down on them at full speed, aiming directly at them. Like a flash, Skipper stiffened, and swerved against Benedict, pushing him out of the path of the oncoming machine. Mr. Gruening roared past them in the car, then pulled up beside the road.

"Good girl, Skipper," said Benedict, patting her. "You seem to have the idea now, all right. I'll take a chance on you now, all the way."

He stopped beside Mr. Gruening's car, and the latter tied a handkerchief securely around his eyes.

"All right, Skipper," said Benedict. "Now I'm in your hands. Do the best you can for me."

With a cane in one hand, he walked briskly along the road with the dog. Skipper hugged

the edge of the road, as she had been taught to do. Occasionally an automobile whizzed past, but so long as it stayed clear of the side of the road, neither Skipper nor Benedict paid any heed. Every few minutes, Benedict would give the order "Left" or "Right" and Skipper would take him across the road, if the way was clear. Several times, when he heard a car coming, Benedict gave the order—prepared not to follow, however, if Skipper obeyed him; but she resolutely stuck to the side of the road, regardless of the command, until the oncoming car had passed safely by.

The next day, they went into the center of the town; and again Benedict was blindfolded, and allowed Skipper to guide him around, trying from time to time to get her to lead him into danger—and praising her for refusing.

Then, a few days later, came the final test. Again Mr. Gruening got out his car, and again Benedict went out with Skipper. But this time, Benedict was blindfolded, and wholly unaware of when or where Mr. Gruening was going to speed at him. It was a dangerous test—heroic, in fact—but one that was always made before a dog was allowed to guide a blind man. Time and again, Mr. Gruening, coming from around some corner, drove straight and fast at the dog and her blindfolded trainer. But

every time, Skipper remembered her duty, and not only got out of the way herself, but made sure that Benedict was out of the way, too. Several times, she nearly yanked him off his feet; but she saw to it that he was out of the car's path.

"Good dog, eh, Benedict?" said Mr. Gruening, getting out of his car in front of the house, as they returned.

"You couldn't ask for a better one," said Benedict, rubbing her head appreciatively. "She's got lots of sense."

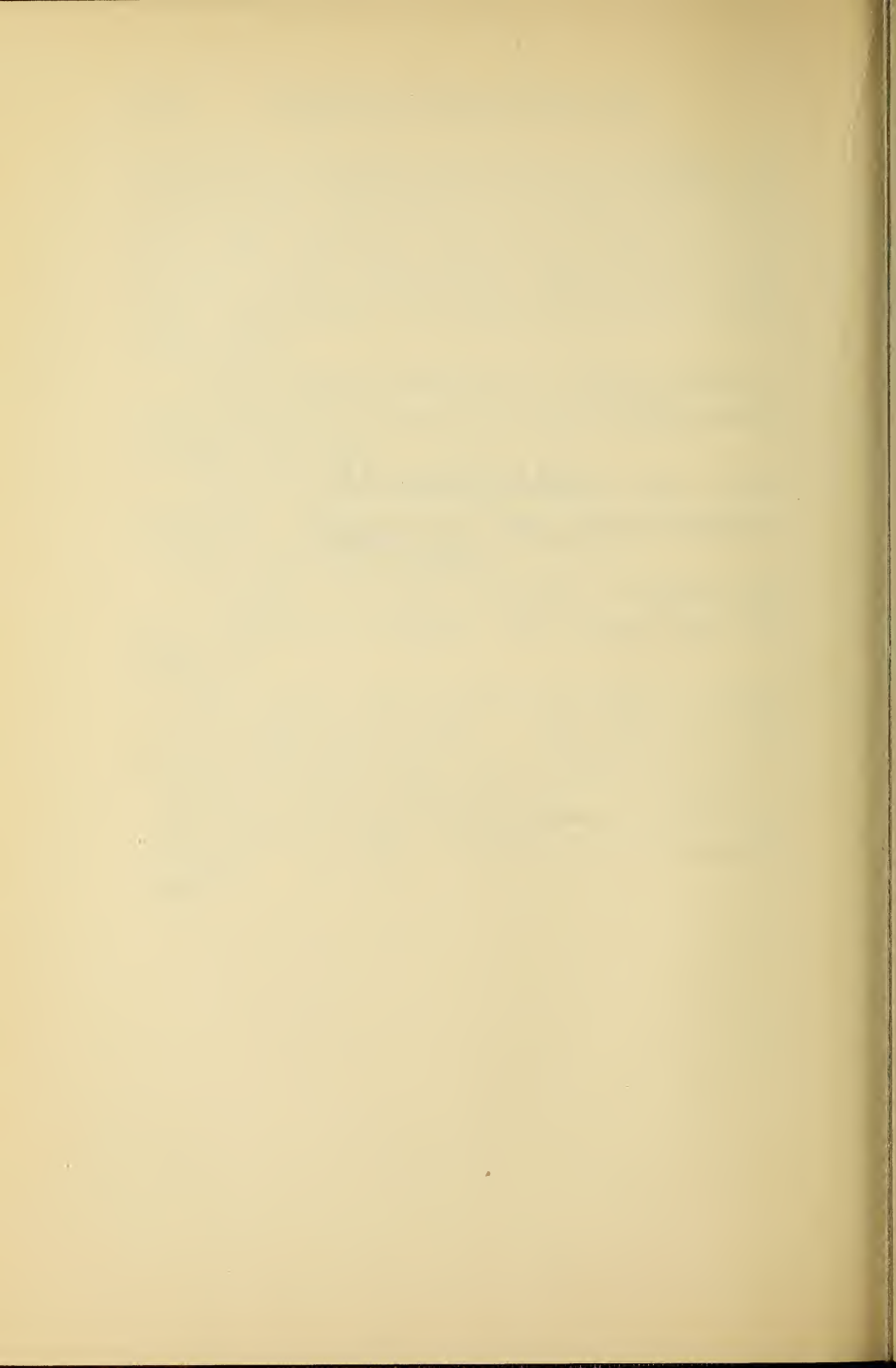
"I guess," said Mr. Gruening, "we can call her education complete, and award the diploma."

"Joe and I will see that she gets it right away," Benedict smiled. "The kind of a diploma she'll like best—one that she can eat."

He turned toward the kennels. "Come on, Skipper," he said. "You've earned a good meal."

## CHAPTER XII

### A NEW PARTNERSHIP



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### A NEW PARTNERSHIP

JERRY'S enthusiastic new hope began to wear off long before the end of the two months it took to train Skipper. At first, he was greatly buoyed up by the thought that soon he would have a dog to help him get about; but as the long, dark days passed, his old despondency began to come back on him.

Ben tried to cheer him by continually reminding him that soon he would be going to the school to get his own training.

"Skipper is getting along fine, they tell me," Ben would report. "It won't be long now before you and she will be going around the way you used to do before the accident."

"Maybe," Jerry would reply, half-heartedly. "But I'm not too sure about it. It seems as if I was tied to this chair for the rest of my life."

When the day came to go to the school, however, Jerry was happier than he had been for weeks. It would, at least, be a change from the monotonous existence he had been leading; and his spirit was raised so much by the pros-



pect of the change that he was definitely hopeful again about the future.

Ben went with him to the school, but left him after a few words with Mr. Gruening. "Skipper is going to be one of the finest guide dogs we've ever trained," Mr. Gruening told him. "I'm sure your brother is going to be very much pleased with her."

Ben expressed his pleasure and appreciation, and then went to say good-bye to Jerry.

"I don't know how all this is going to work out," said Jerry, shaking hands with him. "I've been pretty doubtful about it at times. But somehow, right now I feel better about everything than I have for a long time. If it doesn't work out, it's not going to be my fault: I'll tell you that. I'm going to try to do my part. And if it does work out, you'll get most of the credit for it, Ben. It was your idea. And I want you to know I appreciate it."

Ben gripped his brother's hand warmly, and managed to say, "Nonsense, Jerry. It's all up to you, and I know that you and Skipper will get along fine." Then he walked briskly away, swallowing hard to keep from showing his emotion.

Jerry turned back from the door, feeling his way to a chair. Before he had got seated, however, an unfamiliar voice called out from an-

other room: "Where's that new man? Bring him in, and let's see if he can play checkers."

Mr. Gruening's voice, nearby, answered: "All right, Captain." Then he spoke to Jerry. "That's Captain Blunt. Come in and meet him."

Jerry allowed himself to be guided into the other room, and felt his hand being tightly grasped.

"How are you, Mr. Dillon?" said the captain. "We're glad to have you with us. They tell me that dog your brother brought over is all ready to teach you all kinds of tricks. Well, you'll find she'll be a great help to you, and a good companion, too. But ——"

He was interrupted by a loud barking, and a dog suddenly leaped up on Jerry, surprising him so much that he was nearly bowled over.

"Here, Tally," Captain Blunt shouted. "What kind of a way is that to greet a stranger? Behave yourself, now, or I'll swap you."

The dog dropped to the floor, and walked leisurely away. "She was just trying to be friendly," Captain Blunt explained. "But if you had been an enemy, instead of a friend, you can imagine what her welcome would have been."

"Do you play checkers, Mr. Dillon?"

"Checkers?" Jerry repeated. "Why, I

used to play, but I don't know how I could make out now."

"Make out?" said Captain Blunt. "Why, of course you can make out. You don't think you can't play just because you can't see, do you? Well, I can see I've got to take you in hand. I'll wager you haven't even started to learn braille yet, so you can read and write."

"No," Jerry admitted, "I haven't but I would like to."

"Well, we'll soon remedy that," the captain promised. "But first, I'll initiate you into checkers again."

He pushed into Jerry's hands a checkerboard on which the squares were all hollowed out, so that by running your fingers over them you could tell where the checkers were placed. The checkers themselves, instead of being merely red and black, as ordinary ones are, were differentiated by the shape, so that you could tell by feeling them which were yours and which were your opponent's.

"All you have to do is to look at the checkerboard with your fingers instead of your eyes," said the captain. "When I make a move, you feel of the board and find out what I've done. Then you move. All very simple. You just have to keep a picture of the board and the possible moves in your mind, and let

your fingers keep track of how the picture is changing."

"Well, I'll try it," said Jerry. "I'm afraid I won't be very good—not at first, anyway."

"You'll learn," said the captain. "You'll learn that you can do a lot of things that you never thought or even dreamed you could do without seeing."

And as the days passed, Jerry found that the captain was right. He not only learned to play checkers, but under the captain's tutelage, he began learning to read and write in braille, using an arrangement of dots punched in a paper for letters, instead of the ordinary alphabet that is used by those who can see. He learned how to punch the little holes for others to read, and how to run his fingers over them in order to read them himself.

Similarly, he learned to read a map of the town which had been made especially for the blind men taking the training at the school. The map was built on a big, square board, with the various buildings raised up so that they could be distinguished with the fingers, and the streets represented by grooves. As he felt the map with his fingers, Jerry was delighted to find that he soon recognized many places which he had known as a boy, but which he



had quite forgotten in the years that he had been so much away from home.

Meanwhile, the main business of learning to work with Skipper went on daily. The first day or two was used mostly to get the dog interested in her new master. Not having seen Jerry since the late months of her puppyhood, Skipper seemed vaguely to recognize him; but showed no evidence of being intimately acquainted with him. Soon, however, as Jerry fondled her and talked with her, they became fast friends.

From the very first time that he went out with her, holding the handle with unnecessary rigidity, Jerry knew that he was going to find this method of locomotion a great improvement over the old way. And as he gained confidence in the dog's sure ability to guide him aright, his spirits rose. Within a week, he was walking out with the dog as nonchalantly as Captain Blunt himself.

"They're a great team, those two," said Benedict to Mr. Gruening, as they stood watching Jerry and Skipper stride down the walk toward the road. "I don't know when we've had a more promising pair of pupils."

"You're right, Benedict," said Mr. Gruening. "They'll get along, all right. No need to worry about that."

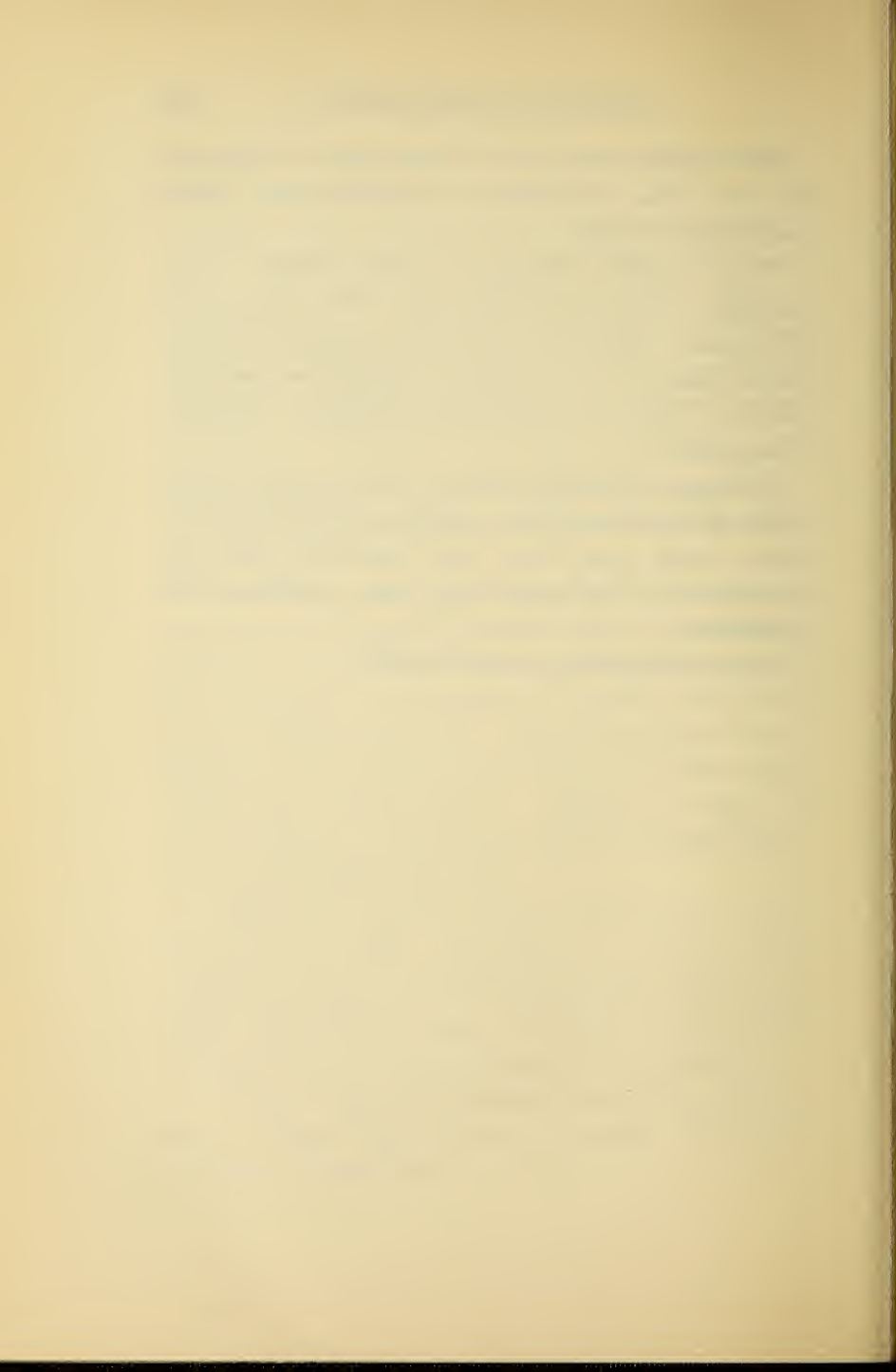
Down at the foot of the walk, Skipper stopped and sat down, to indicate that there were steps ahead.

"All right, Skipper," said Jerry, "I'll navigate those steps for you. And you and I are going to navigate the world in general a lot better than I ever thought it would be possible to do. You're a good dog, Skipper, old pal. Forward."

Skipper straightened up, and moved carefully down the steps, mindful of the responsibility that was hers, and grateful for the warmth of the words her new master had uttered.

The partnership was complete.





## CHAPTER XIII

OFF TO A FRESH START



## CHAPTER XIII

### OFF TO A FRESH START

BEN was sitting on the front porch. He had talked with Jerry on the telephone the night before, and knew that Jerry was due to come home to-day.

"I'll come out and get you," he had suggested, over the telephone.

"Don't you dare," Jerry had replied. "Skipper and I are coming home alone. You wait for us right there."

So Ben was waiting. His mind was not entirely at ease. How would Jerry be able to get here alone with Skipper? They had been walking all around town for weeks, to be sure, but they had never been back here. Would Jerry be able to tell Skipper just how to get here?

His doubts were soon resolved. Around a corner suddenly appeared Jerry and the dog, walking along without the slightest hesitation. Ben sat still, watching them admiringly. Jerry looked like a different man than the brother who had left here only a month ago.

He was walking with his shoulders back, his head in the air, a thin, contented smile on his sightless face. And Skipper, leading the way, looked as proud as a king.

Ben wanted to cry out at them, but held himself in check. He was afraid he might upset Jerry's plan to come home without the aid of any other person—and yet afraid, too, that something would go wrong with the plan, and make Jerry drop back to his old moroseness. Would he know where to turn in? Or would Skipper automatically turn in? Ben waited to see, holding his breath in excitement.

They were almost at the walk now, in front of him. Then, in amazement, Ben heard Jerry speak to the dog: "I guess it must be just about here, Skipper. Right!"

Skipper turned in, and then stopped and sat down at the foot of the steps.

Ben could contain himself no longer. "Grand!" he called out. "How in the world did you gauge the distance so well?"

Skipper looked up, with a glint of warm recollection; but made no move to jump up and greet Ben as she would have done of old. Duty came first, and she awaited the word from her new master.

"Ah, Ben!" said Jerry, gaily. "You like our triumphant home-coming, do you? It was

as easy as pie. How are you, old fellow, anyway? ”

“ Fine,” said Ben, “ and I can’t tell you how good it is to have you back again.” He arose from his chair, and started toward the steps.

“ Don’t come down,” said Jerry, hearing him moving. “ We’re on the way up. Forward, Skipper. Let’s go up and see old Ben.”

Skipper started dutifully up the steps, with Jerry following. On the porch, Jerry let go of the handle. “ There we are, Skipper,” he said. “ I can get around the house all right. All you have to do now is to stand by.”

Skipper, thus released, rushed toward Ben, and received a friendly pat on the head. Jerry felt for a chair, and sat down. “ Say,” he sighed, “ it’s good to be home again! ”

With Skipper snoozing at their feet, Jerry and Ben were soon in the midst of plans for the future. Mr. Gruening, Jerry said, had advised him that it would be wise to move into a new home, lest the old, familiar surroundings make Skipper think she could drop back into her former way of life.

“ You see,” Jerry explained, “ Mr. Gruening was afraid that she might remember so many of the things she used to do here, that she would forget her new job. It’s too bad to



leave the Browns, but I guess we'll have to set up housekeeping for ourselves now—that is, if you are willing."

"Willing?" Ben repeated. "Why, of course I'm willing. I think it will be great to have a place of our own."

They went on to discuss the practical side of the problem. Fortunately, they would have income enough to maintain a modest establishment, thanks to a disability allowance which Jerry was receiving, and the income on the estate left to them by their father. They decided, therefore, to rent a small home there in Mountville, and to hire a housekeeper.

"When you finish school, and go away," said Jerry soberly, "I can keep the place; and at least it will be a home to come back to."

"Say," protested Ben, "don't think you're going to get rid of me as easily as that." But his heart sank a bit, despite his attempt at cheerfulness. What *would* Jerry do as the years passed? Even with Skipper, could he make his life as full and interesting as it would have to be to keep him content?

But in the days that followed, there was little time for worrying about the distant future. Jerry, delighted with the success of his new partnership with Skipper, was constantly trying out new routes around the town. When he

wasn't actually out walking with the dog, he was planning expeditions that they would take later.

"It's a lot of fun," he told Ben, enthusiastically. "All I have to do is to figure out how many blocks to go in one direction, then how many in the next, and so on. It's like working out a puzzle in your mind. Then when I have it all figured out, all I have to do is to keep count of the streets we cross, so that I can give Skipper the right directions. And then if I want to go somewhere in a particular block, it's a little extra fun to try to figure out about how many paces it is from the crossing, and see how near I can come to it. You'd be surprised how many times I hit it exactly right. And of course, if I'm a few paces out of the way, Skipper sets me right. She knows I don't want to walk into any walls, no matter what directions I give her."

The feeling that he could do things for himself had made all the difference in the world in Jerry's outlook on life. To be able to go to a store himself, rather than to wait for things to be brought to him; to be able to do all sorts of errands, and to call on his friends—these things gave life a new brightness. And Skipper, plodding faithfully along in front of him, was the one who had made life worth liv-

ing again. Jerry often told her so, and became daily more attached to her. Every morning he started the day by grooming her as conscientiously as he groomed himself: it was his way of expressing his pride in this partner of his life.

Meantime, Ben was busy looking at houses. When he found one that he thought might meet their needs, he would tell Jerry, and Jerry would take Skipper and start out to inspect it. Of course, he couldn't see it; but by going all over it, and walking around the grounds, he could get an idea of what it was like. He and Skipper made their expeditions separately, and then he compared notes with Ben. Often, Ben would be surprised to find that Jerry had learned more about the house than he had.

"When you look at it, you take it for granted that you see everything," Jerry said. "But when you have to find out all about it by exploring it with your hands and feet, you get a much more detailed idea of what the place is really like."

Finally, they settled on a house. It was a small house, on a quiet street, with a little lawn in front and a big yard in the back. Jerry particularly liked it because it seemed such an orderly place. He had learned that when

things were kept orderly, it was much easier for him to manage his own affairs. Since he couldn't see, he had to be very sure that the things he wanted to use were always where he expected to find them.

When they moved into the new house, he arranged his own room so that it was a model of orderliness. He knew just what drawer and what side of the drawer would contain his shirts, his stockings, his pajamas, his underwear. He could always go directly to a certain shelf, and know that he would find his razor and his tooth-brush. Each suit had a particular place to hang, so that he could choose the one he wanted to wear without the slightest difficulty. Then, too, he had some little tags sewed on most of his shirts, neckties and other articles of wearing apparel, so that he knew by feeling of them what color they were. All these ideas he had picked up from Captain Blunt; and they added to that gratifying feeling of independence which had come to him in such large measure since he had adopted Skipper as his partner.

But, of course, it was Skipper herself who gave him the greatest satisfaction. In the new house, he could get about and do things quite by himself; but when he wanted to go out, it was only with Skipper's unfailing help that he



could manage. With that help, he managed much better than even Ben had thought possible. Indeed, when they started out together, Ben, Jerry and Skipper, Ben often found it all he could do to make his way through a crowded street as quickly as Jerry and Skipper did.

The choosing of a housekeeper took several days. They put an advertisement in the paper, and interviewed several women who applied for the position. The first three or four who came failed to qualify because they immediately began to express their sympathy for Jerry.

"They mean well," Jerry said, "but I want somebody who will let me shift for myself. They seem to think that just because I'm blind, I can't do a thing, and that they've got to fuss around and do everything for me. I don't want a nurse: I want a housekeeper. Skipper is all the help I need."

Then Mrs. Dreyfuss came, and Jerry immediately approved of her. An elderly woman, she began at once to express her ideas as to what the job required. She spoke frankly, companionably, but without any fluttering emotionalism.

"As I see it," she said, "you want somebody to take care of this house for the three of you—you two young men and the dog. I can

do that. You"—talking to Jerry—"are blind. Well, then, you want things kept so you won't be bothered by having things all messed around. I can do that. And what's more, I'll wager I can keep the dog happy. I like dogs."

Skipper walked over to her, sensing that she was the subject of discussion. She put her head up in Mrs. Dreyfuss' capacious lap, and closed her eyes contentedly as the woman stroked her.

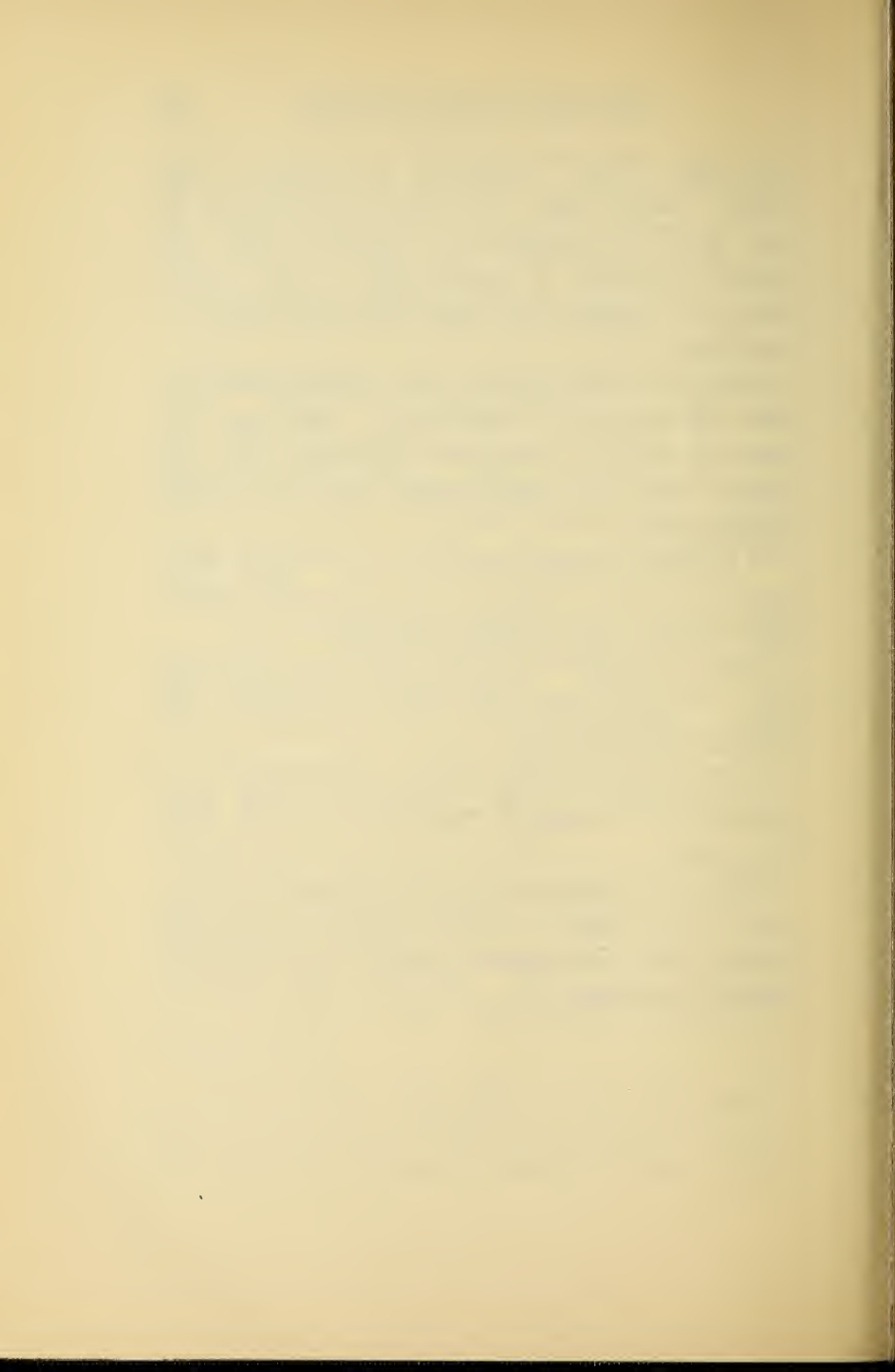
"I guess dogs like you, too," said Ben. Then to Jerry: "Skipper votes for Mrs. Dreyfuss. She's made friends already."

Jerry smiled. "Skipper is the skipper," he said. "If she votes for Mrs. Dreyfuss, I'll have to follow along."

"I'll make it unanimous," said Ben. "I guess you're hired, if you want the job, Mrs. Dreyfuss."

The new housekeeper gave Skipper another pat on the head. "I'll be glad to work for people who have sense enough to take a dog's advice," she said.





## CHAPTER XIV

JERRY HAS A VISITOR



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### JERRY HAS A VISITOR

**B**Y the time Ben's school opened in the fall, they were comfortably established in their new home. It was Ben's last year in high school; and the various school activities kept him busy. He found time, however, to have long talks with Jerry, and to take an occasional trip with him and Skipper.

Jerry's mind was still pretty fully occupied by the new things he was learning to enlarge his independence. He was still practicing his braille reading and writing, and was becoming expert in it. Then, too, he had discovered that he could keep posted on current events by listening to the regularly-announced news summaries over the radio; and that he could get both entertainment and information at the talking pictures, even though he couldn't see the screen. Life, in short, was beginning to become adjusted.

Ben, too, began to learn to use braille, in order that he might be able to communicate with his brother whenever they might be sepa-

rated. He took it up at his own suggestion; and Jerry was delighted. "I'd thought of it," Jerry said, "but I didn't feel like asking you to take on extra studies just to please me. It certainly will make a lot of difference, though, to be able to write to you, and have you write to me when you go away."

The knowledge that eventually Ben would have to go away, either to college or to make his own way in life, was often on Jerry's mind. Even now, with all the new ways that he had opened up to occupy himself, he often found that he was getting restless and a bit lonesome. But he could always look forward to Ben's daily return from school; and if he ran out of things to do for himself, there were many little errands that could be done, with Skipper's help, for Ben.

Of course, Skipper herself was an unfailing companion, and Jerry took great comfort in her. Still he had always led an extremely active life, and even Skipper could not wholly overcome his lonesome restlessness when he found time hanging heavily on his hands.

As the weeks passed, and his life fell more and more into a definite routine, this dissatisfaction increased. He began to consider various occupations that he might take up, to keep himself busy.

"I wonder," he said to Ben, one evening, "if I hadn't better go to school some more, and learn some profession. I could use braille and the typewriter. Lots of blind people have done it before. You know, some fine lawyers are blind, and there are even doctors—specialists in some kinds of diseases—who haven't their eyesight. There are a lot of professions I could learn. And I guess that's just the trouble: I can't make up my mind what to try to do. I made myself so thoroughly into a secret service man, that nothing else really seems to interest me very much."

Ben didn't know what to advise. "Wait until I'm through high school, anyway," he urged. "Then whatever school you decide to enter, I'll enter, too; and we'll go together. Or if you decide not to go to school, we'll do something else together."

Jerry's face lit up with a pleased smile. "Good old Ben," he said. "Maybe we can work something out together: we'll see. But you don't need to feel that you've got to chart your course to coincide with mine, much as I would like to have you. After all, you designated Skipper as the one to keep me in tow, and she has done a great job."

He reached down toward the dog, knowing that she would be right there at his feet, and



stroked her affectionately. Skipper stood up, and rubbed against his knees.

“ We can get along, can’t we, Skipper? ” Jerry said.

The dog emitted a short, satisfied yelp from her throat.

“ Anyway, ” Jerry went on, “ we’ll wait until your school year is over before we decide anything. ”

But the very next day, Jerry had a visitor who was destined to change his train of thought—Jack Devery, one of his former associates in the secret service. Jerry was sitting at the typewriter, writing some letters, when Devery came to the door, and rang the bell.

“ Does Jerry Dillon live here? ” he asked Mrs. Dreyfuss, as she opened the door.

Jerry, pausing in his typing, recognized his voice at once. “ Jack Devery! ” he called out, getting up and walking unerringly toward the door, with his hand outstretched. “ Come in, Jack. How are you? ”

Devery looked at him in surprise. He had not expected to see his old friend coming to meet him this way, just as if he still could see. Nevertheless, he concealed his surprise, and gripped Jerry’s hand. “ Say! ” he ejaculated, “ you look as slick as a whistle. ”

"I am," Jerry assured him. And then, hearing Skipper jumping up on the visitor, he went on: "Meet the Skipper, Jack. She's my aide de camp, and right-hand dog."

Devery patted Skipper's head, and the latter, satisfied, retreated to a corner. Then the men sat down to talk.

"Jerry," said Devery, "the one thing I'd like to tell you, I can't. That gang of crooks that brought you down is still at large. We've worked our heads off trying to locate them, but they are apparently laying low somewhere, and we can't turn them up—not yet, anyway. They've got us buffaloed."

Jerry's face lit up at once with interest. "Say, I wish I could be back in the game," he said.

"So do I," said Devery, "and so does the chief. But ——" He didn't finish the sentence, so Jerry finished it for him.

"But a blind man wouldn't be much good in our kind of work," he said, without bitterness.

"No, I suppose that's a fact."

"We thought we were going to nab them in Whaley City, after we got your message that day," Devery went on, quickly. "But I guess they must have changed their plans. We had men all over the place, watching every field that looked as if it might be used for a landing

field; but nobody saw hide nor hair of them. And we've had men hunting the city for some clue for weeks, without any luck. It's too bad you didn't get a good look at them. It makes it pretty hopeless, when we haven't any description to work on. You didn't even get a glimpse of them, did you—anything that might give us a lead? ”

Jerry shook his head. “ No,” he said, “ I'm afraid not. I could spot them by their voices, or one of them by hearing him walk; but that doesn't do you any good. There isn't any way I can tell you just what their voices sound like. And though I know one of them has a peculiar gait, I don't know just why—whether it's because one leg is longer than the other, or because he is lame, or what. I'm afraid I can't be much help.”

“ Oh, well,” said Devery, “ don't worry about it. The only thing is that we'd doubly like to get them now, after what they did to you. But maybe they'll pull another job after they think the alarm has died down. Then we can get after them again.”

The conversation turned to other subjects, and presently Devery shook hands and left. But after he had gone, Jerry didn't go back to his typing. Instead, he sat in his chair, deep in thought. Skipper got up from the floor sev-

eral times, and rubbed against him, inviting him out for a walk; but Jerry was too busy with his thoughts.

“ Skipper,” he said, finally, “ I believe you and I can find those counterfeiterers. What if I can’t see? You can. And I can hear—which is the main thing, in this case.”

The dog stood in front of him, attentively. Jerry patted her smartly on the rump.

“ What do you say, Skipper? ” Jerry demanded. “ Will you help me? ”

Skipper wagged her tail furiously.



## CHAPTER XV

### FERRY HOUNDS





## CHAPTER XV

### FERRY HOUNDS

WHEN Ben came home from school, he found Jerry in a state of high excitement, and eager to discuss his ambition with him. Jerry quickly told him of Jack Devery's visit, and of the information that he had brought.

"Now here's the point," said Jerry. "They can't get this gang because they have no description of any of the members. I can't give them any description, because I never got a good look at any of them. But I could spot those two who were in the farmhouse easily by their voices, if I ever heard them speak. And I'm the only one who can. The fact that I'm blind might even be a help, in that respect, because my hearing works overtime for me now that I can't see, just as it does for most blind people. It's not that I can hear any better, but simply that my mind pays more attention to what comes in through the ears, since it has to depend more on sounds than it did when my eyes worked, too."

“ You mean you want to try to find those men yourself? ” Ben demanded, in amazement.

“ Why not? ” Jerry wanted to know. “ The chances are still pretty good that they are in Whaley City, even though the boys failed to find their plane. What’s more, if they are following out their plan, as I heard it—and I have a hunch they are—they are hiding out over in what is called the Flats. That means, as I happen to know, that they have to use the ferry to get back and forth to the city proper. The Flats are a big section of the city, but off in a marshy place across the river. The ferry is the only way in or out.”

“ Yes, but I still don’t see how you expect to find them, even if they are there. You can’t go around listening to the voices of everybody in the Flats.”

“ Quite right,” Jerry smiled. “ But I don’t intend to try to do that. All I’ve got to do is to stick on the ferry. Those fellows must come across every once in a while. And sometime—maybe sooner, maybe later—if I’m on the ferry, I’ll spot one of those voices. The rest would be easy.”

“ Jerry, I think it’s too dangerous,” Ben protested. “ You don’t know what those fellows might do to you—or, rather, you know

all too well what they would do, if they found out who you were."

"Yes, but they won't find out," Jerry insisted. "And besides, Skipper has promised to help me." He snapped his fingers, and the dog lumbered to his side, eagerly. "Haven't you, Skipper?" he said. "You'll look out for me, won't you, old girl?"

Skipper barked a reassuring response, but Ben wasn't satisfied. "Jerry," he said, "let me go with you. I can come back and make up my school work later. And you ought to have somebody with you—somebody to run errands and do the things that even Skipper can't do."

Jerry was inclined to veto this suggestion at first, insisting on the importance of Ben's school work; but finally, he agreed to take the matter up with the school authorities. "I can't tell them what we're going to do," he said. "I don't want anybody to know that. But if they think it is all right for you to go away with me for a while, and finish school later, I'll be only too glad to have you along."

And a week later, leaving Mrs. Dreyfuss in charge of the house, they were off for Whaley City—Jerry, Ben and Skipper.

"Boy!" Jerry exclaimed, "it's great to feel back in the harness again, even if it is in an unofficial capacity. I'm just aching to land

those fellows. If we don't, there's no harm done; and if we do, I guess the boys down at headquarters will forgive me for messing into things."

Arriving at Whaley City, they went to a small hotel and took a room. "We may be here only a short time—a few weeks, that is—or we may be here for months," Jerry told the clerk.

"Very well, sir," said the clerk, looking first at Jerry and then at Skipper, with some surprise. "If there is anything we can do to—er—help——"

"Thanks," said Jerry, smiling. "All you need to do is to give us a comfortable room, and have something for us to eat—including the dog—when we want it. I won't need any special attention, except from the dog. Forward, Skipper."

"I guess you won't, for a fact," said the clerk, as Skipper started leading Jerry toward the elevator, in the wake of Ben and a bell-boy. "That dog seems to know her way around."

When they were settled in their room, Jerry began immediately to plan his course of action. "This will probably just settle down into a long vigil," he said. "I'll just have to ride back and forth on that ferry until I hear something, or until I give it up as a bad job. Being



blind, I probably can get away with it without arousing suspicion. I'll pretend I just like to ride on the thing, and haven't anything else to do. Fortunately, it's a nice cheap way to pass the time. Pedestrian fares are usually pretty low on ferries."

Presently, Ben went out and located the ferry, rode across on it, and back. Then he came back to the hotel and told Jerry just how to get there, and what the layout of the deck was. With this information in his mind, Jerry slipped the harness back on Skipper, and fared forth.

"Well, Skipper, we're off," he said. "From now on, we're ferry hounds, you and I."

The hotel clerk, not yet over his surprise at the way Jerry walked along behind Skipper, looked at them and shook his head wonderingly as they stepped out of the elevator, and proceeded unhesitatingly through the door and down the street. But Jerry's mind was so full of his plans that the novelty of finding his way over a strange city hardly occurred to him. He simply gave Skipper the proper commands, keeping count almost mechanically of the crossings, and turning right or left according to the directions Ben had given him for reaching the ferry slip. In a few minutes they



were there, and Skipper led him directly to the ticket office, just as if this had been a common occurrence. Jerry bought his ticket, inquired how soon the ferry would be in, and allowed Skipper to lead him to the entrance. As soon as the ferry had whistled in, and discharged its incoming passengers, Skipper led him aboard. Again the whistle blew, there was the sound of chains rattling, as the ferry-hands prepared to depart, and the boat began moving across the river.

“ Well, Skipper,” said Jerry, leaning against the rail, “ you never thought you’d earn your right to your name on a ferryboat, instead of in an airplane, did you? But you might as well get acquainted with this vessel. We’re due to take a lot of voyages in her, unless we’re luckier than I dare to hope. Let’s explore the craft a bit.”

They started walking around the deck, with Skipper staying close to the rail, and keeping a watchful eye on Jerry and on every possible danger in the path. But though Jerry succeeded in learning his way around the boat, and getting an idea as to where people were likely to congregate, and where he could stand to listen for the voices he hoped to hear, the voyage was otherwise uneventful. So, indeed, were many, many more, as the days passed.

Jerry was not to be easily discouraged, however. Every day he and Skipper appeared at the ferry slip, and began their round of crossing. Over and back, over and back. Before long, they were familiar figures to every ferryboat captain and all the members of the crews. Several of these men soon began speaking to Jerry, and it was not long before he could recognize them by their voices, and call them by names.

They soon came to accept him as their most regular passenger. Noticing that he simply crossed and recrossed the river, without any apparent intention to go anywhere, they took it for granted, as Jerry had intended, that he was merely passing the time away—that he enjoyed the rides, and took these daily excursions purely for pleasure. Now and then, one of them would ask him some leading question, obviously trying to satisfy a natural curiosity as to what his life was, off the ferryboat; but Jerry always passed off such questions with some such remark as: “ Oh, Skipper and I don’t do much of anything except to ride the ferryboats. We’re just what you might call a couple of ferry hounds.”

Occasionally, Ben would go with them, though Jerry had made it a condition of Ben’s coming that he spend as much time as possible

keeping up in his studies. "And besides," he pointed out, "it might look a little less like a time-killing pastime, if you came along too much."

It was rather monotonous business, anyway—this eternal riding back and forth on the ferry. Ben didn't mind missing most of it. But he awaited Jerry's return to the hotel every night with new hope that this would be the day when he would hear a report of progress. Night after night, however, Jerry's report was the same: "Nothing doing to-day. But we'll hang on a while longer. You can never tell when something may happen."

Ben began to wonder if it wasn't just a wild goose chase. But Jerry didn't seem to lose his patience. "We have a pretty good time, even if we never get anywhere, don't we, Skipper?" he would say. And, as a matter of fact, Skipper did seem to enjoy it. If Jerry was late getting started in the morning, she would wait impatiently for him to be ready; and when at last they started down the street, she would march along eagerly, hardly waiting for Jerry's directions.

"You'd think the boat couldn't leave without us, by the way you act," Jerry chided her. But Skipper kept right on.

As the fruitless weeks passed, even Jerry

began to wonder if his patience wasn't turning into mere stubbornness.

"Skipper," he said, one morning, as they started on their first return trip back to the city proper, "maybe we're just a couple of optimistic nitwits. I wonder if we ought to stick this out much longer."

Skipper barked an eager reply, and then cut off a bark virtually in the middle, as Jerry uttered a whistling command of silence between his teeth.

Was it imagination? Or had he actually heard the bull-like voice he had been listening for, just as Skipper barked? With Skipper now standing quietly at his side, Jerry strained his ears. There were voices all around him, but his keen ears were directed toward one particular voice, just distinguishable above the murmuring of the others.

"So, I told him I'd go in and get the groceries, if he'd make the beds," the voice was saying. "One thing I hate is playing chambermaid."

The words were trivialities—nothing of importance. But the voice?

"Skipper," said Jerry, speaking low, "that's our man."

He gave the dog a command, and they moved closer to the deep-voiced speaker. He had

stopped talking now, and another voice appeared to be interrogating him.

“ Coming back right away? ”

“ Yes,” said the voice. “ I’ll be back in an hour or two.”

The whistle blew, and the ferry slid into its slip. The passengers began to disembark.

“ Forward, Skipper,” said Jerry.

“ Not riding any more right now? ” asked one of the crew, as he saw the blind man and his dog going ashore.

“ Not right now, I guess,” said Jerry.

“ I’ve had about enough fun for one day.”

## CHAPTER XVI

SKIPPER IS INTRODUCED





## CHAPTER XVI

### SKIPPER IS INTRODUCED

“**B**EN, I heard him! The man with the fog-horn voice!”

Jerry was so excited that Skipper had caught the enthusiasm, and was barking and jumping around eagerly. Ben tossed a book in the air, and whooped.

“Now what?” Ben wanted to know, immediately. “What did he say? Where was he going? How are you going to catch him?”

“Whoa!” said Jerry, grinning. “One question at a time.”

He dropped into a chair. “I guess we’ve got to do a little scheming now,” he said, more quietly. “We can’t afford to go off half-cocked.”

“I suppose the thing to do would be to get in touch with some of your old crowd, and get a little help now,” said Ben, thoughtfully.

“I suppose so,” admitted Jerry, reluctantly, “but I’d like to get the round-up a little farther along before I do that. After all, there’s just a bare possibility that I might be wrong about that voice. I don’t have the

slightest doubt about it myself, but I wouldn't want to start a wild goose chase. No, I think I'll get a little deeper into this thing before I call for help."

Ben was delighted with this decision. "Good!" he said. "Let me help you, then, and we'll practically deliver this gang to the police, all wrapped up in cellophane."

"Right," said Jerry. "Now just let me figure things out a little. That fellow was going into the city for supplies, and then going back again. That means they are still hiding out over in the Flats. And it means that they do go to town occasionally, just as I had hoped. The thing to do now is to stick to the ferry until I catch them on the way back some day, and then follow them to their hideout. Yes, that's the next step."

He sat still several minutes, deep in thought. "I only wish I knew the lay of the land better over in the Flats. Of course, I could follow them all right, and keep count of the streets so that I could get back; but I'd like to know something about the surrounding streets."

"Maybe I could explore it for you," Ben suggested.

Jerry considered this for a few minutes. Then he sat up and snapped his fingers. "I have it! You can make me a map. Look the

Flats over, draw up a map of the streets, then work it out on a board, the way they do at the school. That will tell me all I need to know."

Ben got busy on this job at once; and Jerry and Skipper resumed their riding on the ferry. Over and back, over and back.

"Skipper," said Jerry to the dog, as they proceeded to the ferry slip one morning, "you are my eyes. I think I'll have to arrange it so that you can spot these fellows for me, in case I don't happen to hear them. The next time I hear that voice, I'll introduce you."

Skipper responded, as usual, with a low murmuring sound in her throat, as if to say: "Whatever you say is all right with me."

But it was several weeks before the opportunity came to make the introduction that Jerry planned. In the meantime, Ben had been busy getting the topography of the Flats, and had finished his map, raising the buildings with plastic wood, and grooving out the streets. Jerry studied the map with his fingers, and developed in his mind a complete picture of the settlement.

"Great!" he said, when he was satisfied that he knew the Flats as intimately as though he had been exploring them himself. "Skipper and I will be able to get around in these streets now as neatly as if we had both been

brought up there. And those crooks are going to have a hard time trying to shake us, once we get on their trail."

Now there followed another test of patience, as Jerry and Skipper continued their excursions on the ferry, waiting to hear that voice again. But at least, Jerry was sure now that his patience would eventually be rewarded: it wasn't so hard to wait, now that he knew he was on the right track.

And at last, sure enough, the day came when he again heard the big, booming voice over the murmuring of other passengers. Again, as the first time, it was on a city-bound trip, so that there was no opportunity to follow the man immediately to the hideout. But Jerry was in no hurry to do that. He was convinced, now, that the gang was settled down here, and that he had plenty of time to get his trap all set for them. This was his opportunity to bring Skipper more definitely into the plan.

He made his way, behind Skipper, along the deck of the boat to the place where the man with the big voice seemed to be standing. There was no danger, he felt sure, that anybody would recognize him. The gang had no way of knowing who he was; and everybody who used the ferries regularly had long since accepted him as just an unfortunate blind man



who rode back and forth with his dog for diversion.

As he drew nearer the man he was seeking, he listened carefully to the other voices, trying to impress them on his mind, so that he would be able to recognize them, too, whenever he might hear them again, even if the man with the foghorn voice was not with them. They were talking about trivial things—nothing that could give him any information about their activities, but merely the chit-chat of men who are making conversation to pass the time away. There were three in the group, he decided, including the one whose voice he remembered of old. He stood leaning carelessly against the rail, apparently paying attention only to his own thoughts—but actually listening intently, and cataloguing the other two voices in his mind as the conversation went on. They were not distinctive voices, like the first man's; but his keen ears nevertheless detected little tricks of speech and tone which he knew would label them for him if ever he should hear them again.

Satisfied, he decided that the time had come to go through with his plan for introducing Skipper to them. He said nothing to the dog, however, as the plan involved keeping her unfamiliar with his intentions. He merely edged



along a little closer to the men, until he was sure that another step would bring him in contact with them.

Then, lunging suddenly forward, he purposely stuck out his elbow and his cane, bumping into the three men as rudely as possible.

“Hey! What do you think you’re doing?” the big voice yelled out, angrily, while similar expressions of wrath came from the others. Jerry, feeling Skipper stiffen, again dug his elbow into the nearest ribs, and swung his cane around sharply.

All three men roared again, belligerently, and Jerry felt a hand fall heavily on his shoulder. It was just what he wanted, for Skipper immediately leaped forward, barking fiercely. The men uttered exclamations of mingled alarm and anger.

“Steady, Skipper,” Jerry said, holding her back firmly. Skipper, quivering with excitement, stood still—but Jerry knew that she was watching the three men closely, and impressing their looks indelibly in her mind. That was what he wanted. He remained still, pretending to be trying to get his bearings, while Skipper had plenty of time to size the men up. Then, to make sure that the meeting would end, as it had started, on a note of belligerence, he charged: “You tried to trip me up.”

“Aw, run along,” said the man with the big voice. “And don’t come around jabbing your elbows into us again, or I’ll toss you overboard—you and the dog, too.”

Skipper growled low, but Jerry kept a firm grip on her handle.

“I don’t know why they allow blind men on the ferries, anyway,” one of the other men put in.

“And that dog of yours!” said the third, addressing Jerry. “You’d better keep that thing at home, or it might get hurt.”

“The dog can look out for herself,” said Jerry, turning away. “Good day, gentlemen.”

“Skipper,” he said, when they were safely out of earshot, “you are now properly introduced. My guess is that you won’t forget those fellows in a hurry, and that when you see them again, you won’t greet them with any sense of pleasure. That was what I wanted. They don’t know it, but they are the enemy. And it’s always well to know who your enemies are.”



## CHAPTER XVII

THE MAN WITH THE LIMP



## CHAPTER XVII

### THE MAN WITH THE LIMP

THERE was a long conference, that night, in the hotel room.

“Now that I have three voices spotted, it ought to be an easier matter to catch one of the men on the way home, and follow him,” Jerry told Ben. “Then, the fact that Skipper has them down in her mind as bad actors will help, too. I figure she’ll let me know whenever she sees one of those three, from now on; so even if I should miss hearing their voices, I’ll be warned.”

“It seems to me, though,” said Ben, “that you ought to count me in on the chase now. After all, if I’m with you the next time you spot them, that would make it a lot easier to identify them.”

“Granted,” said Jerry. “And maybe you’re right. If you want to take up riding the ferries with us, for a while, I’ll be glad to have you along. The only thing is that in pointing these men out to Skipper, I had to make myself pretty conspicuous to them. In a way, I hate to have you recognized as some-



body connected with me, because the time might come when we would need a strange face for some little job or other. But I guess we can overlook that possibility, and take a chance. When you haven't anything else to be doing, you can come along with us, and we'll see what happens."

Accordingly, in the next few days, Ben was often with Skipper and Jerry when they took their trips back and forth on the ferry. But after several days of fruitless ferrying, he stayed at the hotel one day to do some studying. Jerry and Skipper went about their daily round as usual.

They made several trips, across and back, with as little success as in the days when Ben was with them.

"Well, Skipper," said Jerry, as it neared noontime, "I think we may as well drop off after this trip, and get some lunch."

The ferry pulled into the slip. "Forward, Skipper," said Jerry. Skipper started slowly toward the dock, obviously reluctant to leave.

"You don't want to quit yet, eh?" said Jerry. "Well, all right, I'll give you one more ride across and back. But that's all, understand. I'm getting hungry."

He leaned over and patted the dog's side, and Skipper paused appreciatively. Jerry

gave her orders to turn around, and she led him back to the deck. He leaned idly against the rail, waiting for the new passengers to come aboard.

Suddenly, he straightened up, attentively. What was that? He listened intently.

A passenger was walking past him. No word had been spoken. But the way the man walked! Clumpety CLUMP. Clumpety CLUMP. Clumpety CLUMP. As if one leg were shorter than the other! Just exactly the way he had heard somebody walking in that farmhouse back in Ohio!

"Forward, Skipper," said Jerry, softly, and the dog led him along the deck behind the passing passenger.

"Yes, sir," said Jerry to himself, under his breath. "I'm pretty sure that is the other one of those two counterfeiterers."

He found that by walking along behind the man, at a normal pace, he could hear the uneven footsteps ahead, and tell in what direction the man was walking. Having assured himself of this, he directed Skipper to the forward part of the deck, and stationed himself at a point where he would be able to hear the footsteps of the passengers as they disembarked.

"We'll wait here," he told Skipper, softly.

Eventually, the boat arrived at the Flats, and the passengers began to go ashore. Jerry waited until he heard the footsteps of the man with the peculiar limp, and then gave Skipper the word to proceed.

“If we can only keep behind this man, it may be the break we’ve been waiting for,” Jerry said, in an undertone, to Skipper. “I wish there were some way to make you understand that I want you to follow him.”

As Skipper had never seen this particular member of the gang before, however, Jerry decided that he would have to rely on his own ears to keep the man ahead of him. Skipper, he knew, would lead him along, wherever he wanted to go, if only he could keep the man’s footsteps in earshot, and thus know how to direct her.

They walked off the ferry to the street, with Jerry straining his ears. So far, he could hear that unmistakable sound plainly ahead of him: Clumpety CLUMP. Clumpety CLUMP.

“Forward, Skipper,” he said.

The dog led on. They proceeded three blocks, straight ahead. The traffic was getting thicker and noisier, and Jerry began to be afraid that he would lose his man. Skipper, of course, would not take him across a street until the traffic was stopped; and at one inter-

section, the man got well ahead of them. Fortunately, however, he himself was held up at the next crossing; and Jerry arrived there in time to hear him clumping across the street.

At the next crossing, he turned down a side street. Jerry, behind him, heard him turn, and gave Skipper the order to go in the same direction. This led them away from the heavy traffic; and after that it was easier to keep on the trail. Several times, to be sure, the lame man gained substantial leads, as Skipper waited for clear traffic; but they were always able to catch up again before he turned into other streets.

It was a rather zigzag route that the man set for them; but Jerry made mental notes of every turn, and every street crossing, so that he knew just how many blocks they had come in each direction, and would be able to retrace his steps to the ferry without any difficulty. The only thing that worried him was the thought that the lame man might suspect that he was being shadowed. If he did, he might lead them off on a false scent—might even lead them into some sort of a trap.

“ Things are getting a little bit dangerous, Skipper,” Jerry muttered. “ First I had to make myself obnoxious to the other members of the gang, there on the ferry; and now this



fellow is likely to take notice of us following him. If they get to comparing notes, they can hardly help wondering what this is all about. We'd better get this job cleaned up before they do too much thinking about it."

Skipper, conscious only of her job of leading on wherever her master wanted to go, marched along unperturbed. And if the lame man was suspicious, he at least took no open notice of the blind man and the dog who were walking behind him. He simply clumped along, down one street, across another, into a section of the Flats which was populated chiefly by foreigners.

At last, in the middle of a block, he turned in. Jerry wondered for a moment if this was a short block, and if there was a side street where the man turned. If so, he, too, should turn. But the sound of a door being opened, and then slammed, assured him that the man had gone into a building. Accordingly, he walked right on along the sidewalk, trying to show no interest either in the man or in the building. As he walked past the approximate spot where the man had turned, however, he began counting his paces from there to the end of the block.

He turned at the next corner, and gave Skipper directions to lead him around the block,

and thus back to the route by which he had come.

“ If that’s the man I think it is, Skipper,” he said, jubilantly, as soon as he was sure he was out of sight, “ and if that place where he turned in is the hang-out for the rest of the gang, we’re all set.”

He stopped long enough to pat the dog enthusiastically, and she responded with a light bark of appreciation.

“ Skipper, old pal,” said Jerry, “ you’ll deserve all the credit, if we land these crooks. If it wasn’t for you, I’d still be sitting in a chair hating myself, instead of being out here on the job. Good old Skipper.”

Skipper barked again, lightly; but stood still, waiting for the order to move on. She knew that she was being praised, and if she had been at home, she would have jumped up on her master to express her exuberant pleasure. But the responsibility of her job came first. The light bark was the only thing she could permit herself here. She still had to lead Jerry back to the hotel.

Jerry understood her attitude. “ You take your duty seriously, don’t you, old girl? ” he said, smiling. “ Quite right.”

He patted her again, and then gave her the order for which she was waiting. “ Forward.”





## **CHAPTER XVIII**

### **THE SEARCHING PARTY**



## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE SEARCHING PARTY

**J**ERRY forgot all about being hungry, as he retraced his footsteps, caught the ferry back to the city, and hurried Skipper along toward the hotel. Finding Ben in the room, he quickly outlined all that had happened. Ben's eyes glistened with excitement.

"Let me have that map," said Jerry. "I'll show you just where the man turned in."

Ben brought the map, and placed it in Jerry's lap. Jerry ran his fingers along the streets, starting at the ferry slip, and following along, block by block, the route that he had followed. Ben looked over his shoulder, eagerly. Only Skipper failed to be excited. She snoozed quietly in a corner, unconcerned with all this rapid-fire conversation between Ben and Jerry.

"Here it is!" said Jerry, "right in the middle of this block."

Ben studied the map carefully. "Suppose I go take a look at it, and see what the lay of the land is," he suggested.

"Just what I had in mind," said Jerry.

" You look it over, and then we can decide what to do next."

Jerry leaned back in his chair. " Say! " he ejaculated, after a few minutes, " I almost forgot how hungry I was. Have you had lunch? "

" Long ago," said Ben.

" Well, I'll be getting mine, while you go out sleuthing," said Jerry, smiling.

He got up, and moved toward the door. Skipper quickly jumped up from the corner, ready to take him out.

" No, I don't need you, Skipper," Jerry told her, as she brushed against his legs. " I'm just going down to the dining-room; and I can make my way around in the hotel now without bothering you. Go ahead and take a nap. I'll be back soon."

Jerry went to the dining-room, and Ben hurried along to the ferry. Riding across the river, Ben tried to appear nonchalant; but a feeling of suppressed excitement filled him. His part in the search for the counterfeiter, up to this moment, had seemed pale and unimportant; but at last he had a vital mission to accomplish. Walking around the deck, he wondered if he were succeeding in keeping his eagerness from showing itself to every passenger who might glance at him.

As the ferry nosed into the slip, Ben felt as

if he could hardly wait for it to stop. The route over which Jerry and Skipper had followed the lame man was impressed on his mind like a picture; and he wanted to hurry along and get to the mysterious place where the pursuit had ended. He edged up to the chains which held the passengers back, and waited impatiently for them to be lifted.

The ferry hands went about their work of making fast the boat, and lifting the chains with their usual deliberateness. To them, it was just another trip in a lifetime. Ben wanted to shout at them to hurry; but knew that he must restrain himself. He stood there, fidgeting.

At last, the barrier was removed.

"Okay," said the ferry hand who lifted it. But Ben hadn't waited for this word. The minute the chain had been taken away, he had dashed eagerly to the dock, and toward the street.

Walking briskly, he checked off the blocks as he made his way along the route Jerry had pointed out on the map. First, he went through the concentrated business section near the ferry slip. Then he found himself passing through a tenement district. And as he neared the end of his trip, he saw that he was getting into a section of rather squalid little homes,



interspersed with small business establishments such as grocery stores, delicatessens, tailoring shops, fruit stores, shoe parlors, hardware stores.

And here was the last corner, according to Jerry's directions! This next block would be the place he was looking for!

Almost trembling with excitement, but trying to appear as casual as any chance passerby, Ben strolled along the street. He studied the buildings beside him, hoping that his scrutiny would not seem unduly eager to anybody who might be looking at him. First, there was a cigar store, then a big building, with a delicatessen and a shoe shine shop on the street floor, and apparently apartments on the second and third. Next came a printing shop in a two story structure, the second floor again seeming to be occupied as a dwelling. Then a nondescript apartment house, which took up the rest of the block.

Ben wondered if he should risk arousing the suspicion of any possible watchers by going into the doorways and making notes of the names which he could dimly make out on various mail-boxes; but decided against it. Instead, taking another long look at the whole block in order to impress every feature of it on his mind, he strolled on around the corner,

as Jerry had done, and quickly turned his steps toward the ferry again.

Jerry was waiting anxiously for him, when he got back to the hotel. Ben made his report on the block, hardly pausing for breath as he talked. When he mentioned the printing shop, Jerry nodded.

"That sounds like something really worth while," he said.

"As a matter of fact," said Ben, "I think it must have been the printing shop where your man turned in. I counted the paces from there to the end of the block, and it checked with your count almost perfectly."

"It certainly sounds like the right spot," said Jerry. "Counterfeiters have to know how to print; and an obscure printing shop has proved to be the headquarters of more than one gang. We'll have to look into this establishment."

"When? How?" Ben demanded, eagerly.

Jerry smiled at his brother's impetuosity. "Soon enough," he said. "And we'll do it simply by going over there and finding out what there is in the place that might interest us."

"But what if they catch us at it?" Ben wanted to know.

"We have to take that chance," Jerry said.

nonchalantly. "But I don't think they will, if we go about it right."

He cupped his head in his hands, and considered the problem. After a few minutes, he straightened up.

"I think we may as well do it to-night, while we're still hot on the trail," he said. "We'll slip over there after dark, and see if the coast is clear. If it is, maybe we can learn something."

Late that night, the expedition started; Jerry, with Skipper leading him, and Ben trailing along behind.

"Well, you're taking a late ride to-night," remarked the ticket taker, as Jerry came aboard the ferry.

Jerry nodded. "Feeling restless," he said.

On the way across the river, he told Ben to nudge him when the ticket taker next happened to be standing near. Ben did so.

"What do you say if we get off and take a little walk, before we go back?" Jerry said, when he felt this signal.

Ben, understanding that this was merely for the ticket taker's ears, so that he would not think there was anything unusual about their late trip, responded: "Good idea."

They disembarked, and made their way again over the route which the lame man had

established for them. As they approached the block where the printing shop was located, they proceeded cautiously.

"How does it look?" Jerry asked, in a low voice.

"It's dark, I think," said Ben. "I don't see any light. Let me go up and investigate at closer range."

Jerry agreed, and stood back in the shadows, with Skipper, while Ben strolled up to the front of the dark printing shop, and peered in.

"Not a sign of life," he reported, coming back to Jerry and Skipper.

"Good," said Jerry. "Go try the door. It's probably locked, but if it should happen to be unlocked it would save us some trouble."

Ben followed instructions, but found the door locked. Without waiting for further instructions, however, he slipped down a little alley at the side of the building, and tried the windows. The first one was latched securely. He moved on to the next. He shoved gently, and the window slid open. It squeaked slightly, and Ben stood rigid, waiting and listening. Nothing happened. Nimbly, he eased one leg over the sill, ducked his body through the opening, pulled in the other leg, and stood on the floor inside. Again he waited, listening



for any sounds that might indicate that he was not alone. The place remained as still as an unused church. He made his way cautiously to the door, and snapped off the lock. Then he opened the door, and slid out, making sure that he left the door unlocked. He rejoined Jerry and Skipper, and reported, in a whisper, what he had accomplished.

“ Good boy! ” said Jerry. “ Now we’ll give the place a little ransacking. Forward, Skipper.”

Ben slipped ahead, and held the door open, while Skipper unquestioningly brought Jerry inside. Ben closed the door, and slipped the lock again into place. Then, with a flashlight, he began to look around; while Jerry moved around also, feeling things with his hands.

The front room contained merely a counter, a desk, and the usual paraphernalia of a place where orders are taken. The printing equipment was in the back room. Jerry, getting this information from Ben, made his way at once into the back room.

“ Take down any names you find on the desk,” he told Ben, “ and then come out and join me in the back room. That’s where we’re most likely to find something interesting.”

Ben ran his flashlight over the desk, keeping watch through the corner of his eye on the

street outside the window, so that he could put out the flashlight if anybody passed. He found several envelopes, and took down in a notebook the names written on them: "Eureka Printing Co.," "Joseph K. Multine, c/o Eureka Printing Co.," "Mr. Ed Ribbus, c/o Eureka Printing Co." That was all. The other envelopes bore similar addresses. Ben put away his notebook, and rejoined Jerry in the back room.

Jerry was prowling around, running his hands over the printing press and other pieces of machinery. Skipper, now sensing that the undertaking was something out of the ordinary, stood alertly near the doorway, her ears pricked up and her eyes watchful.

Ben threw his flashlight around the dark shop. Over in the corner, a heavy piece of oil-cloth had been thrown carelessly over some bulky machinery. Ben went over, and pulled off the cloth.

"This is a queer contraption," he whispered to Jerry.

Jerry came over, and ran his hands over the apparatus. Ben, watching him, knew that he was excited.

"What is it?" he whispered, keeping his voice subdued with difficulty.

"It's just what I was looking for," said



Jerry, also in a whisper. "It's a counterfeit-ing outfit."

Jerry turned away. "Cover it up again," he said. "This is all we need to know just now."

Ben threw the oilcloth again over the machinery, and they turned toward the door. As they did so, Skipper sensed trouble and growled softly.

"Sh-h-h," Jerry ordered. Then, in a whisper to Ben: "Where's the window?"

Ben took his arm, and led him to the window, still open. Jerry signalled for Ben to get out first; and even as he did so, they heard a key turning in the lock of the front door. Ben tried to pull at Jerry's sleeve, to urge him through the window first; but Jerry gave him a commanding push. He slid through.

Skipper, at Jerry's heels, refused to obey his unspoken command to go through, however; and Jerry knew that it was useless to insist. He climbed through himself, into the alley. Skipper followed in a bound.

Then all three stood just outside the open window. The front door had opened now, and a light had flashed on. A voice made itself heard—a high-pitched voice, which Jerry immediately recognized. Then another voice: booming out like a foghorn!

Jerry whispered to Ben, who softly let the window down.

“ All right,” Jerry whispered. “ That’s the crowd, all right. Now let’s get out of here.”

They slid through the darkness, around the corner.



## CHAPTER XIX

### PURELY BUSINESS



## CHAPTER XIX

### PURELY BUSINESS

THE next morning, after breakfast, Skipper came as usual to Jerry, inviting him to put her harness on, and be off for the ferry. Instead, Jerry patted her and made no move to go out.

“Skipper,” he said, “I think we’re just about done with our ferry riding.”

The dog looked up at him, and uttered a low, begging whine.

“You want to keep on riding, eh?” said Jerry. “Well, it’s too bad you feel that way about it. Personally, I can give it up without a murmur. And the fact is, there isn’t any point in it any longer. We’ll take a walk, after a while, instead.”

Skipper, far from pleased, retired to a corner. These daily excursions had been quite to her taste. But if Jerry didn’t want to go, that settled it. She lay down, and watched her master, waiting for any sign that he was ready to set out.

Ben, who had been on an errand, came in. He tossed his hat playfully at Skipper, but she



refused to be diverted, keeping her eyes on Jerry. "You look as if you were sulking, Skipper," Ben said.

"She doesn't like staying at home," said Jerry.

Skipper looked at them in dignified silence.

"Well, chief," said Ben, turning to Jerry.

"What's the program to-day?"

"I guess you have to play to-day's game," said Jerry. "How does that suit you?"

"Name it," said Ben. "I'm ready for anything."

"All right. What I want now is a good description of these men, and all the information I can get about them. I'd like to have them identified by name, if that is possible. Maybe those two names you copied off the envelopes will help."

"How do I proceed?" Ben demanded. "You'll have to give me more definite instructions than that."

"Give me time," said Jerry. "I'm coming to that. Now, this Eureka Printing Company is just a blind for the counterfeiters. But in order to keep up appearances, it undoubtedly does odd jobs of printing, when any come along. You're to become a customer."

"All right," Ben agreed. "What do I want printed?"

“ Well, let’s have some letterheads printed. That’s as good as anything else. Order a thousand sheets of paper with your name on it. Only your name had better be Roger J. Bennett, or something—anything but your own name. Then maybe if we like the job of printing they do, we can think of something else for them to print. Meantime, you’re getting acquainted with them, finding out what their names are and what they look like.”

“ That’s easy,” said Ben. “ I’m off right now.”

He retrieved his hat from the floor, beside Skipper.

“ Wait a minute,” said Jerry. “ Let me think this out a little. I want to be sure we’re doing this right.”

Ben stood in the door, twirling his hat.

“ Oh, here’s one thing,” Jerry continued. “ Don’t give them any address for the letterheads to be delivered. Tell them you’ll call for them.”

“ All right,” said Ben. “ Anything else? ”

“ I guess not,” said Jerry. “ Good luck to you—and be careful. If you get the idea anything is going wrong, don’t take any chances. Look out for yourself, even if it means losing the crooks. I’d never forgive myself if I got you into any trouble.”

“Don’t worry,” Ben scoffed. “I’ll get along all right.”

Within an hour, he was entering the door of the printshop. A little, wizened-up man rose from the desk behind the counter, and looked at him, inquiringly.

“I’d like to get some letterheads printed,” said Ben.

The little man shuffled over to the counter, and Ben fancied that a look of doubt passed out of his face. He began talking prices. Ben bickered with him a little, and even went so far as to suggest that he might try another shop, to see if the prices would be cheaper. All this, of course, was merely to give himself the appearance of a customer with no other interest than the letterheads and the money they would cost. Finally, they agreed on a grade of paper which was medium-priced. Then Ben made a great deal of fuss about choosing the type he wanted.

“You see,” said Ben, conversationally, “I never had any letterheads of my own before. I want them to look good.”

“These’ll look good,” said the little man. “What’s the name you want on ’em?”

“Roger J. Bennett,” said Ben.

“What address do you want on ’em?”

“Address?” Ben repeated. He had for-

gotten that it was usual to put an address on letterheads; and remembering Jerry's injunction against giving an address for delivery, he was in a quandary for a minute. Then he said, hastily: "I don't think I'd better put any address on. We're likely to move in a little while, and if I put the old address on, I'd have to throw them all away. Just put the name, and Whaley City on it. That will be enough."

The man wrote this down on a piece of paper. Ben decided to forestall any question about where the goods should be delivered.

"When shall I call for them?" he asked.

"I guess you can have 'em day after tomorrow," said the man.

Ben was by no means satisfied with the results of the visit, but he decided that it would be best to hope for better luck when he came back, rather than to try to prolong this visit. He had seen only this one man, and had found no way to learn even this man's name; but maybe things would work out better when he came back after his letterheads. He thought he might make one stab at finding out the man's name, though.

"Who'll I ask for, if you aren't here when I come back?" he asked.

"I'll be here," said the little man, rather sourly.

Ben nodded, and went out.

“Not much to report,” he told Jerry, when he got back to the hotel, “but at least I’ve established business relationships, and maybe I’ll see more when I go back.”

Two days later, he presented himself again at the shop. His hopes were raised as he pushed open the door, and heard talking. They were doubly raised, when a booming voice struck his ears. This must be the voice that Jerry had talked so much about—the foghorn voice! He tried to conceal his excitement as he walked in.

As before, the wizened-up little man was sitting at the desk, but sitting in a chair near him was the other man—a big, coarse-looking fellow, with dark hair and prominent nose and chin. He fitted his voice to perfection.

“Just a minute, Ed,” said the little man, as he arose to wait on Ben.

The big man nodded, carelessly.

The little man turned to Ben. “Oh, yes,” he said. “You’re the fellow that wanted those letterheads.” He reached down under the counter, and pulled out a package, all wrapped in brown paper. Ben decided to try to delay the business a little, in hopes he might get more information. He had heard the big man called “Ed,” and his guess was that he was



the " Ed Ribbus " whose name he had copied off one of the envelopes. But he wanted to get more definite knowledge if possible.

" You don't mind if I look at them, do you? " he inquired. " I'd just like to see how they look."

The little man didn't appear particularly pleased, but made no objection, merely shaking his head. Ben untied the package with deliberation, and appeared to study the letterheads. As he had hoped, the two men took advantage of his preoccupation to continue their conversation.

" Did Joe say how long he'd be gone? " asked the man called Ed.

The little man shook his head. " I guess he'll be back in half an hour or so," he said.

" He'd better," said the big man.

They lapsed into silence again, waiting for Ben to finish his inspection. He decided it would be dangerous to stall too long.

" This looks pretty good," he said, taking out his pocketbook.

The little man made no comment, merely stating the amount due, which Ben paid.

When he went out, however, he didn't head at once for the ferry. The remarks about " Joe " and when he would be back had interested him. " Joe " was probably the " Mr.



Joseph K. Multine " of the other envelope. Ben thought it might be a very good idea to get a glimpse of him.

He crossed the street, and went into a greasy little restaurant. He wasn't at all hungry; but this seemed a good way to pass half an hour or so without arousing suspicion. Moreover, by taking a seat near the window, it was a simple matter to keep a watchful eye on the printshop and the sidewalk in front of it. If anyone entered, he could get a good look at him. Therefore, he ordered a steak, on the theory that it would take some time to cook it, and sat with his eyes directed—casually, he hoped—on the street.

Various people passed, but none went into the printshop. The steak came in, and Ben dawdled over it. Still nobody went into the printshop. He ordered ice-cream, and ate that, practically forcing it down his throat. Then, as the last spoonful disappeared, and he was just wondering if it would be wise to sit there any longer, a man came from around the corner and headed down the street toward the printshop. A lean, angular man, with deep-set eyes and sallow face—and a pronounced limp!

Ben watched him eagerly. Could this be the lame man whom Jerry had followed?

The man proceeded straight to the printshop and turned in.

Ben wiped his mouth with his napkin, concealing a grin of satisfaction behind the linen. This was better.

“ Check, please,” he said.



## CHAPTER XX

### A DIFFERENT KIND OF BUSINESS



## CHAPTER XX

### A DIFFERENT KIND OF BUSINESS

“**N**OW we’re getting somewhere,” said Jerry, when Ben reported what he had seen and heard. “I think it’s safe to assume that we have descriptions of Ed Ribbus, Joseph Multine and one other—the little man. But I’d like to know how many others there are in the gang. There must be one or two more, judging from the conversation I heard that night in the old farmhouse. If we could get the whole gang spotted, I’d feel more like calling in some of the old outfit to help round them up.”

“We can try, at least,” said Ben. “I could get some envelopes printed now. That would give me another chance to visit them.”

“Yes,” said Jerry, meditatively. “That ought to be all right. We can take a post-office box under the name you had printed on the letterheads, and have the number put on the envelopes for a return address.”

“Why do we have to bother with taking the box?” Ben inquired. “Why can’t we just



put any old number on the envelopes? We'll never use them, anyway."

"It would probably be quite all right," said Jerry. "But, on the other hand, these fellows are pretty smart crooks. If they should get suspicious, it would be too easy for them to check up on us; and if they found out we'd used a fake address, there's no telling what they might do. I'd rather not leave any loopholes, if I can see a way to avoid it."

Jerry called Skipper to him, and slipped her harness on; then the three of them went together to the postoffice.

"I'll get the box," said Jerry. "What was that name you used—Roger J. Bennett?"

"That's right," said Ben.

"I suppose the general delivery window would be the place to go," said Jerry. "Where is it?"

"Straight ahead of you," said Ben.

"Good. Forward, Skipper," said Jerry, and the dog led him directly to the window, while Ben waited. There was one man ahead of Jerry at the window, and two more formed in line behind him as he waited; but his business was soon transacted, and Skipper brought him back to Ben.

"This may be just a silly precaution," Jerry admitted, as they walked away from the

postoffice, "but I don't like to leave anything undone that might affect our plans. As a matter of fact, I had a distinct feeling, there in the postoffice, that things weren't just as they should be; but I guess it was just imagination. You didn't see anything wrong, did you?"

"Not a thing," Ben assured him. "Don't you worry. We'll finish this job up in a few days now without a hitch. It's as good as done right now."

"Sure we will," Jerry agreed. "But sometimes," he added, thoughtfully, "I seem to feel hunches more strongly, now that I can't see. That was the way it was there in the postoffice. I felt as if somebody was watching me, or something. I suppose it was just a foolish bit of imagination."

"Must have been," said Ben, positively. "The place looked as innocent to me as a church."

They took an aimless walk around the city, and eventually went back to the hotel. They had decided to wait a few days before Ben should go again to the printshop, in order that his reappearance to get the envelopes printed might seem like a mere afterthought.

When he finally went, however, he again found the little man alone. This was a disappointment, but he endeavored not to show it.

"I decided I'd better have some envelopes printed, to go with those letterheads," Ben said.

The little man quoted prices, and showed him samples of type. Ben selected envelopes and type, agreed on a price, and ordered a thousand printed. He gave the name of Roger J. Bennett, again, and the number of the post-office box which Jerry had engaged under that name.

"You want to call for 'em?" the little man asked.

"Yes," said Ben; "and be sure the address is plain."

"All right. I'll have them ready for you to-morrow afternoon," said the man. "About three o'clock."

Coming back next day, at the appointed hour, Ben was delighted to see that the print-shop had more to offer, this time, in the way of personalities. Sitting around the desk were not only the little man, but the big fellow called Ed, the lame man presumably named Joseph Multine, and another man—a dapper, dark-skinned man with a black moustache. The latter arose as Ben entered, and went toward the door, as if to leave. Instead, however, he remained in the doorway, leaning idly against the wall, with his hands in his coat

pockets. The little man, meantime, was getting out a package of envelopes.

"Hold it, Luke," said the man with the moustache, out of the corner of his mouth. There was something menacing in his voice. Instinctively, Ben looked toward the door, but the man was standing in it, gazing at him coldly.

The big man, Ed, arose lumberingly from his chair, and looked inquiringly at the man with the moustache. The latter nodded, significantly. The little man, still holding the package of envelopes, stepped back, squinting at Ben sourly.

Something seemed to be wrong, but Ben tried not to show that he was disturbed. "How much are they?" he asked, taking out his pocketbook.

The little man stepped back farther, and made no answer. Big Ed pushed past him, and suddenly reached across the counter and seized Ben's wrist in a relentless grip.

"What ——? Cut it out!" said Ben, trying to tug his arm away. "What's the idea and who are you?"

"That's what we want to know," said the big man, in his booming voice. "What is the idea? What's your game?"

"Game?" Ben repeated. "I don't know

what you mean. I came here after some envelopes."

"Yeah," said Big Ed. "Some envelopes with a nice postoffice box address. A postoffice box that was taken just the other day by that blind guy. It's lucky Dominick, over there, happened to be in the postoffice just then, and spotted you with that blind guy. Now what's the idea? First he gives us the bum's rush on the ferry, then he shadows Joe over here—only Joe didn't realize it until we got to talking about the guy. Then you start fooling around here, with your phony postoffice box and your phony name."

"You're crazy," said Ben.

Ribbus grinned crookedly. "Maybe," he said. "But we ain't so crazy but what we can shadow you guys to your hotel, and find out that you're registered under a name that don't sound much like Roger J. Bennett. Come on, now. You'd better come clean—or else!"

Ben thought fast. "There's nothing to come clean about," he insisted. "I guess I can have any name I want printed on paper. What difference does that make to you? And as for my brother's shadowing anybody, that's absurd. How could he, when he's stone blind? Now let me go."

"Come in here," said Ribbus, yanking him



around the corner of the counter. "Sit down in that chair. And sit still. If you try to get out, it won't be healthy. Dominick has got a gun in that pocket of his. And he loves to use it."

Ben looked quickly toward the man with the moustache, who still stood in the doorway, his hands in his coat pockets, his face drawn into a stolid scowl.

Ribbus walked over to the desk, and took up the telephone. Ben sat up stiffly as he recognized the number that the big man asked for. It was the hotel!

"Let me speak to Mr. Dillon," said Ribbus, when the hotel answered.

Ben took a deep breath, as he made up his mind what to do. He would shout a warning to Jerry, if they got him on the wire.

"Hello. Is this Mr. Dillon?" Ribbus asked, obviously trying to make his over-sized voice sound suave and polite.

Ben opened his mouth, ready to shout. A dirty hand came from behind, and clamped itself over his mouth.

"Not a chance," said the lame man. "I'll just keep you quiet, so you won't disturb Mr. Ribbus' conversation." He smirked in mock politeness.

Ribbus went on talking into the telephone.





## CHAPTER XXI

JERRY TAKES A RIDE



## CHAPTER XXI

### JERRY TAKES A RIDE

**T**HAT voice! Jerry recognized it at once over the telephone. Even Skipper, lying at his feet, recognized it as it boomed out of the receiver, and growled in her throat. But Jerry signalled to her with his hand to be quiet, and gave no sign that the voice was familiar.

“Yes,” he said, “this is Mr. Dillon.”

“This is the Andrew Memorial Hospital, over in the Flats,” said the voice. “Your brother has been in a little accident, Mr. Dillon, and we thought you would want to come right over.”

For a moment, Jerry wondered if he could be wrong about the voice. Was it really a hospital? Was Ben actually hurt? But after a moment's reflection, he was sure that he couldn't have mistaken that voice. This was some kind of a ruse. He decided to try to get to the bottom of it.

“Really?” he said, and the tone of alarm that came into his voice was quite genuine. “Is he badly hurt? Tell me more about it.”

“ Why, it seems that he was knocked down by an automobile,” said the voice. “ We think he has a broken arm. He wanted us to get in touch with you, and ask you to come right over.”

Any lingering doubts that Jerry may have had about the voice were dispelled now. And the insistence on the phrase “ come right over ” indicated that some sort of scheme must be afoot to waylay him. Apparently, something had gone thoroughly wrong. Probably they had captured Ben, and were holding him prisoner. Maybe something even worse had happened. His heart thumped as he thought of it. He would have to do something, and do it quickly—but it would be foolhardy to play into the hands of the gang. He must make them think that they had him completely fooled. Then he could decide what to do.

“ I’ll come right over,” he said.

“ Do you know how to get here? ” asked the voice.

As a matter of fact, from studying the map that Ben had made for him, Jerry had a vague idea of where the hospital was; but he realized that Ribbus was seeking an opportunity to give him directions. “ I’m afraid I’m not very sure how to go,” he answered. “ Perhaps you could give me the directions. Maybe my

brother didn't tell you, but I'm blind; and it's a little difficult for me to get around."

"Yes, we understood that," said the voice. "For that reason, I promised your brother that we would meet you at the ferry. You just come across on it, and we'll be there with a car."

"Fine!" said Jerry. "I'll come along right away."

He hung up, and waited a moment, thinking. Then he took up the telephone again, and called the Andrew Memorial Hospital. He wanted to be sure that he was right in his suspicions, though he didn't think there could be any doubt about it. It didn't take long to find out. The hospital had never heard of any patient by the name of Ben Dillon, and had admitted no accident patients at all that day.

"Well, Skipper," Jerry said, as he dropped the receiver on the hook, slowly, "it looks as if we had got into trouble. And it's up to you and me to find out what's happened to poor old Ben, and get him out of it, if we can. I only hope it's not too late."

He sat still for a moment, thinking things out. The plot was clear enough. The gang would be waiting for him at the ferry. He was expected to walk right into their hands. They would get him into their car, pretending to be



from the hospital. After that—well, that was a different story.

He reached for Skipper's harness, and she came to him quickly to have it put on. "I think we can fool them, Skipper," he said. "Come on."

They went down to the street, and Jerry had Skipper lead him to a nearby department store. There he surprised a clerk by buying a woman's hat, coat and scarf. With these in a bundle under his arm, he and Skipper went out again, and Jerry hailed a taxicab and into it Skipper guided his master.

"Listen, driver," said Jerry. "I want you to take me across the ferry to the Flats. I'll give you further directions when we get there, but the main thing is to drive right along as soon as the ferry gets in. Don't stop until I tell you. And don't be surprised at what I'm going to do. There will be some people over there waiting for me, but I don't want them to meet me, and I don't want them to recognize me. I just want to be sure they're there. And I want you to get a look at them, if you can, and tell me what they look like. But don't stop."

"Okay, chief," said the driver. "But how am I going to spot these birds?"

"Well, I'm just hoping you'll notice them

looking as if they were waiting for somebody," said Jerry. "Try it, anyway, and keep a sharp watch out."

He opened his packages, pulled out the hat, coat and scarf, and proceeded to put them on. The driver looked back, over his shoulder, in surprise.

Jerry grinned. "Just a bit of a disguise," he said, pulling the scarf around his neck so that it would cover his masculine shirt and necktie.

The driver shook his head, and shrugged his shoulders, obviously somewhat in doubt as to his passenger's sanity. However, he drove on, without voicing his doubts.

When they reached the ferry, Jerry ordered Skipper to lie down in the back of the cab, so that she would not be seen. He himself leaned back in the seat, and was elated to hear the ticket taker, who had chatted with him innumerable times as he and Skipper had ridden back and forth on the ferry, pass by without a word of recognition.

The ferry chugged on across the river, and nosed into the slip. "Lie low, now, Skipper," Jerry warned. "But be ready to get up and take a look when I tell you."

The dog lay quietly on the floor of the cab, with her eyes on her master.

“ All right, Skipper,” said Jerry, as the cab moved forward. “ Come up.”

Skipper bounded up, and almost immediately growled fiercely. Through the window, she had seen something she didn't like.

“ Quick, driver,” said Jerry. “ Who are we passing? ”

“ Couple of fellows seem to be looking for somebody, all right,” said the driver. “ I guess they must be the birds you mean. One's a big guy, with a chin like an ox. Other fellow is sort of dark. He's got a moustache and snappy clothes.”

“ Keep on driving,” said Jerry, as the cab seemed to slow down. “ Did you see anybody else? ”

“ No, that's all I saw,” said the driver. “ Where do you want to go now? ”

“ Anywhere,” said Jerry. “ Just keep on moving, until we get out of the way of those fellows. They didn't seem to see me or the dog, did they? ”

“ No, they didn't even look—at least, not more than a once-over,” said the driver. “ They seemed to be expecting somebody to come off afoot.”

“ Good! ” said Jerry. “ Just drive around a little while, and we'll get the next ferry back. Only don't go to the dock until it's practically

time for the boat to pull out. I don't want those fellows to spot me. All I wanted to know was whether they'd be here or not."

Jerry kept Skipper out of sight, when they came back to the ferry. The men, the driver said, were still there, looking rather impatient, but paying no attention to outgoing passengers. It had not occurred to them apparently, that Jerry might have come ashore without being seen. Still, he felt much safer when the ferry whistled, and pulled out, leaving the two men behind.

He had the driver take him back to the hotel, divesting himself of his female disguise as he rode. At the hotel, he and Skipper went at once to their room. Jerry sat down at the telephone.

"I've got to try to find out what they've done to Ben, and what's behind all this," he said, seriously, to Skipper. The dog put her head in his lap, comfortingly.

Jerry took up the receiver, and told the operator to get the Eureka Printing Company for him. The voice that answered was one that he had heard on the ferry, talking with Ribbus. Probably the little man that Ben had described to him, Jerry decided.

"This is Jerome Dillon," said Jerry, into the telephone. "My brother went there some



time ago on an errand—to get some envelopes. He hasn't come back. Can you tell me anything about it? ”

“ Dillon? Dillon? ” said the voice. “ There was a young fellow here by the name of Bennett.”

“ See here,” said Jerry, realizing that the man was sparring for time. “ You have him there. I know that. Now what is it you want of him? ”

“ Oh, you do know that, do you? ” said the voice, snarling. “ Well, you know altogether too much for your own good, get that? And that's why we're holding on to this precious brother of yours. He's going to stay right here for a while, too. And whatever your game is, you'd better chuck it. Because the first time we get a hunch that somebody is spilling things that we don't want spilled, it'll be just too bad for the kid brother. Get me? ”

“ Why, you—you ——” Jerry fumed. Then he saw the futility of angry words. “ I see,” he said, and hung up.

Skipper rubbed gently against him, as he slumped back in the chair.

CHAPTER XXII

THROUGH THE REGISTER





## CHAPTER XXII

### THROUGH THE REGISTER

**B**EN, being forced to sit there and hear Ribbus tell Jerry, over the telephone, that he was in the hospital, and that Jerry was to come at once, had been filled with apprehension. Heedless of his own safety, he tried again and again to cry out, and warn his brother that it was a trap; but Multine, the lame man, had stifled his voice every time he tried it. Finally, Ribbus had hung up, with a smirk of satisfaction.

“Well,” said Ribbus, turning to Ben, “we’ll have your brother here to keep you company pretty soon.”

Multine, now that the telephone conversation was over, took his hand away from Ben’s mouth. “What’s this all about, anyway?” Ben demanded. “What do you want of us?”

“Just aiming to keep you out of trouble,” Ribbus said. “And maybe, by and by, you’ll tell us what it is all about. You’re the boys who are messing around, sticking your noses into other people’s business. But we’ll come to that later. Right now, we’ll just go

and keep our date with that blind brother of yours."

Big Ed lumbered to the door, and beckoned, with a sidewise nod of his head, to Dominick, who still stood framed in the doorway. "Come on, Dominick," said Ribbus. "You and I are the reception committee. I reckon Luke and Joe can look out for this lad while we're gone. Hope you don't have to use a pacifier, Joe," he added, with a crooked grin, as he waddled through the door.

When he and Dominick had gone, Multine turned to Ben. "Guess you'd better come upstairs," he said. "And don't try to get away, or make any noise, or I'll plug you. Go ahead, Luke. You go up and open the doors. I'll fetch the kid along and there won't be any foolin' either."

The little man went out into the hallway, and trudged up the rickety stairs leading to the living quarters on the second floor. Multine, with his hand significantly in his side pocket, motioned to Ben to follow. Then he marched along behind Ben.

Upstairs, Ben followed Luke into a narrow bedroom, ventilated only by an airshaft. Luke held the door open, while Ben passed through, with Multine standing behind. Then the door was closed, and a key turned in the lock. The

men clumped downstairs, and Ben was a prisoner.

They had made no attempt to search him, apparently taking it for granted that he had no dangerous weapons on his person—which was quite true, much to his regret. He looked around in the little room. The only door was locked, and there were no windows—only the airshaft, which seemed to offer no hope of escape. Ben sat down on the mussed bed which was the room's chief article of furniture.

Hopefully, he felt through his pockets, but found only his watch, his pocketbook, a pencil, some odd pieces of paper and the pocket braille slate which he had taken to carrying with him in order to communicate with Jerry whenever necessary.

But the slate! That was an idea! If only he could discover some way to get a note to Jerry! But then he realized, sadly, that a trap was already set for Jerry, and that he was more than likely on his way, right now, to fall into the trap. Soon Jerry, too, would be a prisoner. Writing notes to him wouldn't do much good then.

Still, Ben couldn't help feeling relieved at the realization that Jerry would soon be here with him. He had tried to warn him; but since he had failed, it would be a comfort, at least, to

have Jerry at hand. Perhaps he could think of some way to outwit this gang yet.

Ben leaned back on the bed, and tried to relax. The murmur of the voices of Luke and Joe Multine drifted up from downstairs. Ben tried to listen, but could only make out an occasional word. He got up and went to the door, and glued his ear against it; but couldn't hear much better. Then he saw a hot air register, over in the corner of the room. He tiptoed across the room, got down on his knees, and listened through the register. Here the voices came up to him quite plainly. The men didn't seem to be talking about anything of importance; but he decided to keep on listening. They might say something of interest, sooner or later.

He stretched out on the floor, listening to their idle chatter; but had almost lost interest in what they were saying, when the telephone rang. The little man, Luke, answered it; and Ben, listening, quickly understood what it was all about. Somehow Jerry had caught on to the plot! Then they had not captured him! Ben gripped his fingers on the iron work of the register, and trembled with excitement. He understood that Jerry had called up to find out about him, and that the men, taken by surprise, hardly knew what to say.



Even when he heard the threat which he knew was aimed at his own life, he didn't feel afraid. If Jerry had discovered what had happened, he would find some way to rescue him. Ben was sure of it.

He heard Luke hang up the receiver, and curse. "He gave 'em the slip," Ben heard him report, angrily, to Multine. "That's a pretty kettle of fish. And they're probably still down there at the ferry, waiting for him."

"You'd better go down and tell them," said the lame man. "I'll stick here and keep watch of the boy upstairs."

Ben heard the door slam, as Luke went out; then there was only the sound of Multine, moving around alone below. A few minutes later, the others all came back.

"Well?" said Multine, as they came in. "Now what?"

Ben listened eagerly at the register.

"I don't know who these guys are," Big Ed Ribbus boomed out, "nor what they're up to. It may be perfectly harmless. After all, they're just a boy and a blind man: they can't be very dangerous. But there's something fishy about them. They know too much, and they're too smart. Imagine that blind guy getting wise to our little scheme like that. The



guy is too slick. I don't feel safe with him nosing around. I say we'd better take a trip for ourselves—get out of here, before he spills something."

"Yeah?" It was the voice of the black-moustached Dominick. "Well, what do we do with the one upstairs? Bump him off?"

Ben shivered, involuntarily, at the cold-blooded suggestion. But he kept on listening, more intently than ever.

The man called Luke spoke up. "Listen. I told the blind fellow, over the telephone, that we were holding his brother to make sure he behaved himself. I told him if anything happened that looked fishy, we'd do for the boy. And that seemed to stop him short. I figure it's good insurance for us to keep hold of this kid. If we bump him off, and they find him, the blind one will yell his head off, and we'll have the whole world hunting for us. If we keep him along with us, maybe the other fellow will keep his trap shut, and hope to get him back."

"Right!" boomed Big Ed. "We take him along with us. Maybe we can pump him a little, too, when we get around to it—find out what he knows, and what he and his brother are up to. My guess is they think they are playing detective—a couple of amateur bulls.

They'll find out that ain't a healthy business to be in."

"All right," said Multine. "But where do we go? You know the word we got about the farmhouse out in Ohio. How there's been somebody snooping around there. We can't take a chance on that again."

"You remember my telling you about that spot up in Vermont?" asked Ribbus. "As nice a natural hideout as I ever saw, up there in the mountains. I've had it in the back of my head, for an emergency, for a long time. And it looks to me as if now was the time to head for there."

"Do we take both cars?" asked Luke.

"Sure," said Ribbus. "Why not?"

"We'll have to stick together," Luke said. "You're the only one who knows the way. If I drive the other car, I'll have to keep right behind you."

"Here," said Big Ed, "let me have that road map. Now look, here's the way to go. If you lose me, just follow this route; it's as straight as a bee line."

Ben listened eagerly.

"Here you are. This is the town," Ribbus went on. "Glassville. If I get there ahead of you, I'll wait at the hotel. Then from there, I'll show you the way, out through the woods."

“ All right,” said Luke. “ I’ll go get the other car.”

The conversation stopped, and Ben sat up.

“ Glassville,” he said to himself, thoughtfully. “ Glassville, Vermont.”

## CHAPTER XXIII

### TWO MESSAGES



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### TWO MESSAGES

IF there were only some way to get this information to Jerry. Ben rested his head in his hands, and tried to think how that might be possible. He had the braille slate, of course; and he could write it all out. But what good would that do? How was he going to get his note into Jerry's hands, even after it was written?

He got up, and walked over to the bed. The problem seemed to be beyond a solution. He took the braille slate out of his pocket, and turned it over, reflectively, in his hands. Then he adjusted it, and began to punch out the little dots on the paper which would spell out words to anyone who knew how to translate them. After all, he decided, he could write the note. Even if there proved to be no way to send it to Jerry, there could be no harm in writing it. And if some way should turn up . . .

"Jerry," he wrote, "they are taking me to a hideout in the mountains, near Glassville, Vermont. Ben."



That was all that needed to be said. But now what could he do with the message? He slipped it in his pocket, hoping some idea would come to him, and hearing again the murmur of voices, tiptoed over to the register.

"Say, that ought to fix him," Big Ed's voice was saying, with a harsh laugh. "Come on, Dominick. We'll go up and fix things with the boy upstairs."

Ben arose hastily, and slipped back to the bed. He sat down on the edge, and pretended to be surprised when the door opened, and the two men came in.

"How would you like to write a little note to your brother?" Ribbus asked.

Ben was startled. Had they been spying on him? Did they know about this message in braille which he had in his pocket?

Their actions soon reassured him. Ribbus pulled a sheet of paper from his pocket, and turned to Dominick. "Let me have your fountain pen," he said.

"But that won't do any good," said Ben. "He's blind. He can't read."

"Well, he can get somebody to read it to him, can't he?" Big Ed demanded.

"I suppose so," Ben admitted.

"All right," said Ribbus. "Now write what I tell you."

Ben took the fountain pen, and waited.

“ Dear Whatever-his-name-is,” Big Ed dictated. Ben wrote it down: “ Dear Jerry.”

The dictation continued: “ These people are going away, and are going to leave me here.”

Ben looked up in surprise. That wasn't the way he had heard the plans outlined. Had they changed their minds? He hoped so. Anyway, he wrote it down.

“ They are going to tie me up, and leave me in a little bedroom where I am now, upstairs over the printshop.”

Ben wrote this down, his hope mounting.

“ They say they don't want to hurt me, because that might get them in trouble, but they think you and I know too much, and they want to get safely away before I am released.”

“ Are you really going to do that? ” Ben asked, as he wrote it down.

“ Sure,” said Big Ed. “ Now just keep on writing: By the time you get this note, they will be gone, and it will be safe all around for you to come and let me loose. You will find me in the upstairs bedroom.

“ How does that sound? ” Big Ed demanded, as he finished the dictation.

“ Say, that's great,” Ben said, with genuine feeling.

“ All right,” said Ribbus. “ Then maybe

you'd better add one more line. Say: I honestly believe this, and please come. Then sign your name."

Ben finished the note, gladly, and handed it to Ribbus, who stood studying it for a moment, then folded it and put it in his pocket.

"So it sounds pretty good, does it?" he said, and laughed again the way he had downstairs a few minutes before. "Well, now ain't it just too bad that he won't find you when he comes?"

He was standing at the door as he spoke, and he slammed it behind him, turning the key in the lock.

"You mean ——?" Ben shouted.

Big Ed's harsh laughter was the only answer from the other side of the door. Then the two men clumped downstairs.

Ben was furious. They had tricked him! They didn't mean to leave him here at all! Was it another attempt to set a trap for Jerry?

He hurried lightly over to the register, and listened to the voices downstairs. What he heard reassured him somewhat, although he had difficulty in catching all the words.

"You got all the letters burned up, Luke?" Ribbus was asking. "We don't want to leave anything that the blind fellow might find, if he

goes to prowling around in here—or anybody else.”

From this, Ben deduced that at least the men still planned to leave at once, and not be here when Jerry came.

The talk was now of preparations for the departure, and in a few minutes he heard Dominick coming up the stairs to get him. He was sitting on the bed, as before, when the door opened.

“Okay,” said Dominick. “Come on. We’re going somewhere.”

“But I thought you were going to leave me here,” Ben protested, hoping against hope that his ears had deceived him.

“I said, come on,” Dominick snarled. “Never mind what you thought. Do what you’re told.”

Ben arose from the bed, slipping a hand cautiously in his pocket as he walked toward the door. His fingers grasped the note that he had written for Jerry in braille.

Dominick seized him by the other arm, and started to pull him along. Pretending to hold back, Ben managed to engage his captor’s attention in the task of yanking him, so that he was able to drop the note in the doorway, behind him. As he did so, he quit struggling, and allowed himself to be yanked forward.

Dominick, intent on his task, kicked the door shut, and led him downstairs.

The little man called Luke, and Joe Multine, the lame man, were in the front of the printing shop. Ribbus sat at the wheel of a big, high-powered car, out in the street. Dominick stopped with Ben at the foot of the stairs.

"Now listen," he said. "I'm coming behind you, with a gun in my hand. You just march along, and don't peep, or it'll be the last time. Get into that car, beside Ed. I'm getting in the back seat, where I can keep my eye on you."

Ben went out and got into the car, as directed. Luke and Multine came to the door.

"We'll start along," Big Ed rumbled at them. "You just fix up the welcome sign for our pal's blind brother, and come along."

Ben's heart sank. "The welcome sign!" What did that mean?

Ed stepped on the gas.



## CHAPTER XXIV

### THE WELCOME SIGN





## CHAPTER XXIV

### THE WELCOME SIGN

NEVER, since Skipper had come into his life, had Jerry felt so despondent over his blindness as he did after hanging up the receiver with the realization that Ben was in the hands of the counterfeiters. All his impulses were for action, and yet what could he do? If only he had his eyesight back, he felt, he would be able to do something—he didn't know what, but something. But what could a blind man do in a case like this?

He wondered if he ought to call the police, or ask for aid from his old associates of the secret service. Several times, he was on the point of taking up the telephone and putting in a call for help; but every time he abandoned the idea before going through with it. They had threatened to kill Ben if anything aroused their suspicions. Jerry couldn't bring himself to take such a risk.

He sat there in his room, got up and moved around, sat down again. If only the telephone would ring, bringing him some news on which he could act! If only he could think of some

way to act, even without any more news! But all he could do was wait, wait.

Skipper, realizing that something pretty bad had happened, tried her best to show her master that she sympathized with him. She coaxed him to put on her harness, and let her take him out for a walk; but Jerry only patted her sadly, and talked to her in a voice which told her more than words could do.

It seemed to Jerry that he had fidgeted around in that room for an eternity, when a rap came on the door. Jerry jumped, then called out.

"Yes. Who is it?"

"A message for you, Mr. Dillon," said a voice, which Jerry recognized as that of a bellboy.

"Come in," said Jerry.

The bellboy entered. "This just came by a messenger boy," he explained. "The manager thought you might want it at once."

Jerry took the envelope, slit it open with his finger, and took out the enclosed message. He ran his finger over it to see if it was in braille. It wasn't. He handed it back to the bellboy.

"Would you read it to me, please?"

The boy looked at the message, and gasped. "Why! Say!" he stammered.

"Read it. Quick!" Jerry ordered.

The boy read it in excited tones. "Dear Jerry: These people are going away, and are going to leave me here. They are going to tie me up, and leave me in a little bedroom where I am now, upstairs over the printshop. They say they don't want to hurt me . . . ."

Jerry sank down in the chair, as the boy read on, listening eagerly.

"Say, Mr. Dillon, this isn't a joke, or something, is it?" the boy demanded, as he finally finished.

Jerry shook his head.

"It's young Mr. Ben?" the boy went on. "Say, you'd better call the police. Here, let me do it for you."

"No!" Jerry stopped him, quickly. "I'll take care of it."

"But you aren't going to try to get him, alone, are you?" demanded the boy, incredulously. "Let me go with you, Mr. Dillon. Really, you ought to have somebody. You might get into all sorts of trouble. If this is a kidnapping, you can't tell what it might lead to."

"Thanks," said Jerry, "but I can handle it all right." He took out a bill and handed it to the boy. "The most you can do for me is to keep all this under your hat," he went on. "Call a cab for me, will you?"

The boy went out, shaking his head. And a few minutes later, Jerry, in a taxicab with Skipper, was hurrying toward the ferry. And twenty minutes later, the cab drew up in front of the printing shop. Jerry and Skipper got out.

“Wait for me here, please,” Jerry said to the driver, and then let Skipper take him to the door. He tried the knob, and the door opened. Jerry pushed in.

“Anybody here, Skipper?” he asked.

The dog made no reply—but her silence reassured him. She would have announced the presence of anyone who looked unfriendly: he was sure of that.

The stairs, as Jerry recalled it, were straight ahead. He gave Skipper directions to take him that way. She led on to the foot of the staircase, and stopped to signal the presence of the stairs.

“All right, Skipper,” Jerry said. “Forward.”

She started up ahead of him, and then, after climbing three or four steps, she suddenly stopped, and sat down.

“What’s the matter, Skipper? Forward,” said Jerry.

But the dog refused to budge.

“What’s wrong, Skipper?” Jerry de-



manded. Then, calling in a subdued voice: "Ben! Are you here?"

There was no answer. And still Skipper sat stolidly on the stairs, refusing to proceed. Jerry stuck his cane out, examiningly. There seemed to be nothing ahead but the stairs. He tried each of the steps with the cane. Then suddenly, as he touched the cane to a step just ahead of Skipper, it slipped crazily. Jerry almost lost his balance, but saved himself by hanging onto the handle of Skipper's harness.

"What's this?" he demanded, half aloud. He hung the cane over the banister at his side, and reached his hand out to explore the reason for its slipping. Something wet and slippery met his hand. He smelled it. Soap!

The step had been thoroughly coated with soap, and so had the one above it.

"Good girl, Skipper!" he said. "You certainly saved my neck that time. So that was the game—to try to get me up here, and let me slip and fall on my head? But they didn't know what a smart dog you were, Skipper."

He gave her an appreciative pat, and then, on hands and knees, and with one hand holding firmly to the banister rails, he continued up the stairs.

"Probably Ben isn't here," he said, quietly, to Skipper. "It looks as if this were just an-



other plant. But we might as well find out for sure."

At the head of the stairs, he straightened up, and began feeling his way around. He opened several doors, and explored the rooms to which they admitted him; but they all seemed thoroughly empty. Then he tried the door of the room where Ben had been locked up. And as he entered, his foot encountered a piece of paper. Almost automatically, he stooped and picked it up. And the minute his fingers touched it, his pulse quickened.

"Skipper!" he cried. "It's braille!"

Skipper barked, encouraged to see Jerry feel so enthusiastic again.

Jerry ran his finger quickly over the message: "They are taking me to a hideout in the mountains, near Glassville, Vermont."

It was as if a great load had been taken from his heart. Jerry stuffed the note in his pocket, and gave Skipper a lusty pat.

"Maybe everything is going to be all right, Skipper, after all," he said, buoyantly. "Let's go."

## CHAPTER XXV

A TALKATIVE HOST



## CHAPTER XXV

### A TALKATIVE HOST

JERRY lost no time in catching a train for the nearest railroad point to Glassville. It was an all-night ride on the Pullman, but the only objection Jerry had to that was the rule of the railroad that dogs had to stay in the baggage car. However, Skipper was allowed to lead him to his berth, and then the porter took her away, promising that she would get the best of care.

It was early in the morning when the train pulled into the town where Jerry was to leave; but he was already up and dressed. The porter brought Skipper in, and together they got off the train. Jerry felt somewhat lost, as the train steamed away. In larger places, there were always porters at the stations to lead the way to taxicabs, which, in turn, would take you wherever you wanted to go. But this was a small town, and Jerry judged from the silence around the station that such metropolitan luxuries were not available. Presently, however, he heard footsteps approaching, and a Yankee voice spoke to him.

"Somebody going to meet you, Mister?"

"No," said Jerry. "I was hoping to be able to hire a car. Is there one around here I can get?"

"Guess I can get one for you," said the man. "I'll call up Seth Foster. He runs the garage here, and takes anybody that wants to be taken in a car."

"Are you the station agent?" Jerry inquired.

"Yes," said the man. "Here, I'll take your bag into the station for you, and you can sit in there until Seth comes over."

"Thanks," said Jerry.

"I noticed you seemed sort of stuck out here," the man explained, as if in defense of his intrusion. "You—er—you're ——"

"Blind, yes," said Jerry. "But my dog here does my seeing for me. Only neither of us knew just where to go here, being strangers."

The station agent picked up Jerry's bag, and Skipper, knowing this to be her cue, followed him into the station, leading Jerry.

"Just make yourself comfortable," said the agent. "I'll call Seth up and get him right over. He probably isn't very busy. Do you want him to take you far?"

"Glassville," said Jerry, sitting down on a

bench. "There's a hotel over there, isn't there?"

"Such as it is," the agent said. "The Glassville House."

He went to the telephone, and Jerry could hear him calling the garage man. "Seth says he'll be over in a few minutes," he reported, as he hung up.

The car soon arrived, and Jerry and Skipper were whizzed away toward Glassville. An hour later, they were in the Glassville House. Jerry was not wholly at ease as he entered. He had considered the possibility that the men he was seeking, who should have arrived sometime late the night before, might have decided to spend the night at the hotel. If they should see him here, he knew they wouldn't hesitate to take quick action. It was a great relief, therefore, to walk into the hotel and have nothing happen.

Seth, the garage man, brought in his bag, and called out to the proprietor of the hotel: "Here's a guest for you, Lem."

Jerry had a feeling that Seth also made signs to indicate that the new guest was blind. He said nothing himself, but walked up to the desk in absolute confidence, with Skipper leading him.

"Glad to have you here, sir," said the pro-



prietor. "Guests are mighty welcome these days, they're so few and far between."

"Scarce, are they?" said Jerry, smiling.

"They certainly are," the proprietor went on, obviously enjoying the opportunity to have somebody with whom to talk. "Seems as though nobody goes to hotels any more, what with all these roadside stands and cabins and one thing and another. You probably wouldn't believe it, but you're the first regular guest I've had for better than a week. Of course, I did have some men in here for supper last night; but you might know they'd come after the cook had gone home, and I had to rustle up something for them myself. Then, they wouldn't hear to putting up for the night. Drove off up into the Notch, two carloads of 'em."

Jerry, more interested than the proprietor knew, hoped he would keep on talking about his last night's visitors; but the proprietor rambled off on some other subject. Jerry knew that it would be an easy matter to get him to tell more about the men in the two cars later on, so he didn't press any questions.

"By the way," he said, when his host paused for breath, "how about a little breakfast for me and the dog? We're pretty hungry."

“ ‘Course you are,” said the proprietor. “ I’ll take you up to your room, and we’ll have breakfast ready for you right away.”

Jerry was elated at the talkativeness of the hotel keeper. He was just the sort of man who would supply a lot of information without having to be pumped. After breakfast, Jerry settled down in a chair in the lobby, and engaged him again in conversation.

“ They tell me it’s pretty wild country up in the Notch, north of here,” Jerry said.

“ Yes, sir,” said the proprietor. “ There’s not much of anything up there except woods and mountains. There used to be some logging camps up there, but they haven’t been worked for a good many years now. I was thinking of that, just last night, when those fellows that stopped here for supper lit out for there. For the life of me, I can’t figure what they’d be wanting to go skylarking up that way for, in the middle of the night. Five of them, there were. But I didn’t make much talk with ’em—didn’t like the looks of them well enough for that. One of ’em was a nice enough looking youngster, but he didn’t hardly open his mouth, except to put a little food into it, all the time they were here. I couldn’t help wondering how he happened to be mixed up with ’em, because they struck me as a crowd that

wasn't up to any good. But I figured it wasn't any business of mine—and anyway, when I tried to talk to 'em, they as much as told me to keep still. Well, it takes all kinds to make a world."

Jerry nodded, and his host rambled on. But he had learned all he wanted to know. After a while, he went into a telephone booth, and put through a long-distance call to Washington. He talked for a long time—much to the curiosity of the proprietor—and when he was through, it was arranged that half a dozen of his former secret service associates would arrive in Glassville the next morning.

Jerry had hesitated about taking this step. He knew that he would never forgive himself if it resulted in anything happening to Ben. But, on the other hand, he was thoroughly apprehensive of what might happen to Ben if he were left in the hands of the counterfeiters. Now that they thought that they had thrown him off the trail, they might decide that Ben was merely an encumbrance, and he knew that they wouldn't hesitate to kill him and dispose of his body in the woods, if they decided this was the easiest course.

Alone, he and Skipper could do nothing, he reasoned, to save Ben. But now that he was sure the men were up in the woods—probably

hiding in one of the abandoned logging camps which the hotel man had told him about, it should be a simple matter for half a dozen men to take them by surprise. All this, he had pointed out to his former chief in Washington, who had been amazed to learn that Jerry had located the counterfeiter, after they had virtually been given up by everybody else.

Skipper had waited outside the telephone booth throughout the long conversation. Jerry, emerging, took the handle of her harness. "We'll take a little walk, Skipper," he suggested. Skipper stepped along eagerly.

"That's a clever rig you've got there," said the proprietor, as they passed him, on the way out. "And that must be a smart dog, to lead you around that way."

"You bet she is," said Jerry.

He and Skipper went on out, and Skipper led him for a brisk walk down the road a mile or so, then back.

"Say," said the hotel man, as they entered the lobby again, "you know those fellows I was telling you about—the ones that were here last night."

Jerry stopped short. "Yes," he said, his heart pounding.

"Well, sir, blamed if I didn't just see one of them, back here in the village. He's over at

Bingham's store right now. Can you imagine that? Now what do you suppose they were in such a rush for last night, and then come back here to-day? "

" Did you talk with him? " asked Jerry, suddenly feeling quite differently about his host's loquacious tongue, and fearing that he might have told the other man of his arrival.

" No," came the reassuring answer. " He didn't come over here. Not yet, anyway. I don't know what he'd be doing at the store. Of course, he might be getting provisions; but I don't see where his crowd could be stopping. There's nothing up in the Notch, as I told you, but the old logging camps. Wait a minute! There he goes now. He's driving up the Notch road again. Well, sir, what do you know about that? "

Jerry didn't answer. His mind was too busy. What if the man had seen him, when he and Skipper were out walking?



## CHAPTER XXVI

A VISITOR IN THE NIGHT





## CHAPTER XXVI

### A VISITOR IN THE NIGHT

THE day dragged by. Jerry, thoroughly alarmed by the thought of what might happen to Ben if the gang had discovered that he had followed them here, remained in the hotel the rest of the day. He reproached himself for having gone out at all—a foolhardy thing to do, he told himself. He half expected, at any minute, to hear the roar of hostile voices, and the sputtering of revolvers, aimed at himself.

“You seem sort of agitated,” the hotel man observed, as Jerry sat nervously in the lobby. “Anything wrong?”

The man’s curiosity was obviously aroused by Jerry. All day he kept bringing the conversation around to give Jerry an opportunity to explain why he had come here; but Jerry did not choose to enlighten him. Long trained in keeping things to himself, he was doubly careful not to tell this talkative man anything, realizing that anything he said would soon be told to anyone whose ears the hotel man could reach.

In one way, he regretted that he couldn't take this man into his confidence. It would have made things much simpler to have his assistance in keeping an eye out for the members of the gang. But the man was too much of a gossip. He would be constitutionally unable, Jerry decided, to keep anything confidential; and it would be unsafe to have the news of this manhunt get around before the others arrived from Washington.

But if the hotel man's gossipy nature made him an unsafe confidant, it also made him very useful as an informant. Toward the middle of the afternoon, he came and sat down beside Jerry again in the lobby, obviously pleased with himself because he had some news to relate.

"You know those fellows I was telling you about—the ones that went off up toward the Notch last night?" he began.

"Yes," said Jerry, trying to show no undue interest.

"Well, sir," continued the hotel keeper, with the satisfaction of a born gossip, "I was just talking with Jud Tucker, who has a farm back the other side of the Notch, and he says he met a fellow turning into the old logging road up here three miles. It must have been that one that I saw over at the store this morn-

ing. And those fellows must be staying in there at the old logging camp. Now what do you think about that? ”

Jerry shook his head. “ Maybe they’re lumbermen,” he suggested. “ Perhaps they’re looking things over with a view to starting some new operations in the woods.”

“ Maybe,” said the hotel man, skeptically. “ But I never saw any lumbermen so anxious to get out into the woods in the middle of the night. There’s something mysterious about this whole business, if you ask me.”

“ You say this road is just three miles out of the village? ” Jerry asked, trying to sound as if he had no other interest than a conversational one.

“ Yep. And the camp is a couple of miles into the woods from the highway. The old road hasn’t been kept open for years. They must have had a nice time getting those two big cars in there, especially at night.”

This was interesting news indeed. For the moment, Jerry forgot his fears of what might happen to-day, in thinking about how easy it would be to-morrow for his associates to slip up on the counterfeiters in the old logging camp, now definitely located as their hiding place.

As the afternoon wore on, with no untoward

happenings, Jerry began to feel less worried. He decided that luck must have been with him, and that he had not been seen by the member of the gang who had been in town. Buoyed up by this increasing confidence, and by his knowledge that to-morrow would bring friends to help him, he enjoyed a good dinner, and turned in early.

“Skipper,” he said, as he brushed out her coat before going to bed, “to-morrow is going to be a big day. We’ve got to try to save Ben, and if we’re lucky, we’ll land that gang in jail, where they belong.”

Skipper looked up at him, attentively.

“The only thing about it that I don’t like, Skipper,” he went on, “is that when we get that gang rounded up, our job is finished. It has been like old times to be in the harness again. Yes, Skipper, men have to be in the harness, just as you do; and like you they’re happier that way than they are in being idle. But I guess I’ll have to find a different kind of a harness for myself after to-morrow—if our plans work out. But we must get Ben away from them, above everything. We need Ben, Skipper—you and I.”

A final flourish of the brush, and Jerry finished his task. Then he patted the dog, and she settled down to sleep. Jerry undressed,



placing his clothes methodically in places where he would know just where to find them without any delay or difficulty in the morning, and climbed into bed.

He lay awake for a long time, his mind busy with plans for the big day ahead; but finally he dropped off to sleep. How long he slept, he didn't know; but suddenly he was awakened by Skipper, tugging at his bedclothes. At first, he thought it must be morning, but soon the utter stillness of the place convinced him that it was still night. Skipper continued to tug at his bedclothes.

Jerry was about to ask the dog why she was awakening him, but some instinct told him to be quiet. Instead of speaking out, he whispered in her ear: "What's up, Skipper?"

Satisfied that she had succeeded in getting her master awake, Skipper trotted over to the door, and uttered a low growl in her throat.

Jerry told himself that Skipper probably was alarmed at some perfectly innocent noise; but nevertheless, he decided to be prepared for any more serious cause of alarm. Quietly, he slipped out of bed, and put on his clothes. From the bottom of his bag, he pulled out a revolver, which he examined with his fingers to be sure it was loaded and ready for action. He smiled a little ruefully to himself, in the



darkness, as he slipped the revolver in his pocket.

"A lot of good this would do me," he thought, "when I can't see to point it."

Still, it made him feel safer to have it in his pocket. It might, at least, frighten somebody, if he found himself in a tight place.

Skipper was still over by the door. Jerry could hear her breathing over there, though she was making no other noise. On tiptoes, he crossed the room, and stood beside her, listening.

Sure enough, somebody was moving around out in the hallway. Probably it was just the proprietor, he told himself. Or perhaps another guest had arrived during the evening. Yet whoever it was, he was apparently moving about very cautiously, and quietly.

A key rasped in a lock, and a door opened with a slight creak, then was closed gently. Two or three light steps, and then another door was opened the same way. Then another, a little nearer.

Jerry's mind became alert. Why should anyone be opening one door after another, along the hallway? There seemed to be only one answer. Somebody was making a search—a search, in all probability, for him!

He touched Skipper's nose lightly, as a sig-

nal for her to keep quiet. Then he moved back against the wall, at the side of the door. He took his revolver out of his pocket. The door next to his own was opened, then shut again, and the light footsteps sounded just outside.

Jerry held his breath. He had one big advantage, he thought, hastily. He would be expected to be asleep. He could at least take the intruder by surprise. And though he would have to act without being able to see his antagonist, Skipper would see him, and would be on the alert for any false move.

He heard the key placed with apparent care in his lock—a skeleton key, no doubt, which would easily open these old-fashioned locks. The key turned, and the lock snapped. The door-knob rattled slightly.

Jerry, his back pressed against the wall, lifted his revolver.

The door opened, and a footstep sounded on the threshold. Jerry waited just long enough for the intruder to step inside. Then, pushing out his revolver toward the place where the man's back should be, he was gratified to feel it come up against a coat.

"Don't move!" he ordered, prodding the revolver into the man's back.

The man gasped in surprise, and Jerry shot his free hand out, and made sure that his pris-

oner's arms were elevated. Feeling along the right arm, he grabbed a revolver out of the man's hand. Then, with his own gun still prodding the man's ribs, he took a flashlight out of the other raised hand. Slipping these in his pocket, he quickly ran his free hand over the man's clothes, taking the skeleton key out of his pocket, but finding nothing else.

Then, motioning to Skipper to go outside, Jerry jumped backward, slammed the door shut, and quickly locked it on the outside.

For the first time, the man inside began to talk.

"Let me out of here," he demanded, rattling the door. "What's the idea?"

His voice fairly thundered in the quiet night. That same foghorn voice!

## CHAPTER XXVII

IN THE WOODS



## CHAPTER XXVII

### IN THE WOODS

“**M**AKE yourself at home, Mr. Ribbus,” said Jerry, through the door, “but please don’t roar like that. You’ll disturb the other guests. Or you would if there were any other guests.”

“Think you’re pretty smart, don’t you?” Ribbus shouted back. “Making believe you’re blind! Say, if you’re blind, I’m dead and buried.”

Jerry grinned, and patted Skipper, who was growling menacingly at the door. It pleased him to realize that he had given Ribbus reason to think that his blindness was merely a hoax. If only it were!

“Listen, Ribbus,” he said. “You’re too noisy. And it isn’t going to do you any good. I’m staying right outside this door, and if you try to get out, I’ll shoot. You’ll find that it’s quite a drop to the ground from the windows, too. You probably could make it, but you’d break your neck doing it. So my advice to you is to settle down and take it easy until morn-



ing. Then we'll see what we can do about letting you out."

Big Ed grunted angrily, but presently Jerry heard the bed springs creak as he flung himself onto the bed. Jerry sat down on the floor, leaning against the door, and ran his hand over Skipper's back.

His first thought was to stay right here, making sure that Ribbus remained a prisoner until his reinforcements came. But then a troublesome possibility occurred to him. What if one or more of Big Ed's confederates were waiting for him outside? He had been able to capture Ribbus, because he took him by surprise; but anyone coming upstairs now, and seeing him sitting out here in the hall, would have no trouble at all in disposing of him. Of course, Skipper would give a warning if anyone appeared, but it would be too late to gain anything by the warning.

Well, Skipper was his only reliance. He would have to depend on her to tell him whether or not Big Ed had come alone. And the only way to avoid being taken by surprise up here, was to go down and scout around a little with the dog.

Fortunately, he had slipped Skipper's harness on, while dressing himself. So now he stood up, took the handle of the harness, and

tiptoed behind the dog toward the stairway. He didn't have his cane, which he usually used when walking with Skipper; but he got his hand on the banister, and made his way downstairs behind her. He hoped that Big Ed had not heard him go. He wanted the captive to think he was still there, carefully guarding the door.

Skipper led him cautiously through the empty lobby, and out the door. Here Jerry stopped.

"See anybody, Skipper?" he whispered.

The dog made no answer, and Jerry assumed that the coast must be clear. Moving forward, Skipper led him down the steps, and then stopped, indicating something in the path. Jerry put out his hands, and found that there was an automobile there—empty, of course, as otherwise Skipper would have warned him. Probably it was the car that Ribbus had come in. Jerry made his way around to the back, and ran his fingers over the number plate. Yes, it was undoubtedly Big Ed's car. Well, he hoped Ribbus would have no use for it for a while.

Jerry sat down on the hotel steps to consider what he should do now. Apparently Big Ed had come alone. But the very fact that he had come suggested that probably the counter-

feiters all knew that he and Skipper were here. It looked as if he had been seen yesterday, after all. And as this probability dawned on him, he suddenly realized that it put Ben in great jeopardy. They had threatened to kill Ben if anything lessened their safety; and certainly they would take his appearance here as a distinct threat to their safety. This was bad!

Nervously, he kicked at the ground with his feet. His toe encountered something, and he leaned and picked it up. It was a stick, which some hiker had apparently cut in the woods to use as a staff. Good luck, thought Jerry. Since he had left his cane in his room, this would serve as a very good substitute if he decided to go anywhere with Skipper.

And the more he thought of Ben, the more firmly he became convinced that he and Skipper should go somewhere—should, in fact, try to find their way out to the logging camp where Ben was held a prisoner. Probably they could do nothing to help him, but at least they could try. His successful encounter with Ribbus had given him confidence in his own ability to meet a difficult situation, even without his sight.

Moreover, the fact that Ribbus was locked up in the room merely added to Ben's danger.

The others must have known where he was going, and why. They would be waiting for him to come back. When it became apparent that he had run into trouble, they would think only of their own safety. And if it came to the necessity for flight, Ben could only be a hindrance and an added handicap to them.

"Skipper," said Jerry, "I'm afraid we can't wait for the boys to get here from Washington. We've got to do something right now. I think I can find the road that goes out toward the Notch. As I understand it, this road that we're on runs into it just over by the store. Then it's three miles to the old logging road, and two miles along that to the camp. We may get lost, but I'm for trying it."

Skipper stood up, as if she understood, and was eager to be off.

"All right. Forward," said Jerry.

It was a risky thing to do, Jerry realized. Probably utterly foolhardy, he told himself. But he couldn't remain inactive, knowing that Ben's life was in grave danger.

He followed Skipper along to a point where he thought the Notch road ought to be, and then ordered a left turn. It proved all right, and they marched on northward. Now the problem was to know when they came to the old logging road, three miles on.



Jerry felt of the wrist-watch which Ben had given him for his birthday, several months before—a specially constructed watch, with raised numerals, and hands so exposed that Jerry could tell by feeling of it what time it was. He found that it was a quarter past four. He knew that ordinarily he walked a mile, with Skipper, in about twenty minutes. Thus, at his usual gait, they would have gone three miles in just an hour, or at a quarter past five. With this in mind, he walked on behind Skipper.

When the hour was nearly up, he began telling Skipper to turn to the right, as he knew from the hotel man's conversation that the logging road ran off in that direction. But Skipper, as Jerry well knew, would not lead him off the road unless she was absolutely certain that he knew he was leaving the road. She would take him to the edge, and stop, for further directions. Jerry, with his staff, would investigate, and discover that there was no road, and then give her directions to proceed. But by continually telling her to go to the right, every few steps, he eventually found her leading him into the logging road.

“ Good girl, Skipper,” he said. “ This must be the road we want. Now it's two miles to the camp, more or less. Keep your eyes open.”

They pushed on, going more slowly now, as the road was uneven and full of rocks, so that Jerry had to feel his way along rather gingerly. Ordinarily, a walk of this sort would have been pretty tiring to Jerry, but he was so intent on the task ahead of him that the thought of being tired never occurred to him. When he judged, from studying his watch, that they must be nearly there, however, he began to go more slowly, stopping every few steps to listen. He didn't want to walk into the arms of the enemy.

They pushed on cautiously and slowly for about ten minutes more, and then, as Jerry called another halt, he knew by the difference in the way the wind sounded in his ears that they had come into some sort of a clearing. He strained his ears for any sound that might indicate that the counterfeiters were around, but heard nothing.

Every step that he took now, he knew, was leading him nearer to grave danger. Maybe he was walking straight to his death. Yet he had complete confidence that Skipper would notify him if anyone hove in sight. And the thought of Ben and how he might be expecting him, kept him moving on.

A few minutes more, and there was another change in the way the wind hit his ears. This



time it was almost stilled, as if he had stepped into a dead zone. He knew what that usually meant—a building. He must have come alongside the camp. He listened again, intently, and this time he did hear something. And it was a most welcome sound—the even, guttural breathing of sleeping men.

Here was more good luck! Evidently, Big Ed's associates had been so sure that he would be successful that they weren't even losing sleep in his absence. Now if only he could see, so that he could locate Ben, and get him out of here!

Skipper was his eyes: she would have to do the job for him. It would be dangerous, of course. If she should fail to understand the need of keeping quiet, she would quickly arouse the sleeping men, and then the jig would be up. There was even a possibility that one of them might be awake now, and that the appearance of Skipper would be the signal for a catastrophe. Yes, it was a wild gamble. If Skipper failed, it meant doom for all of them, for then he, too, would fall into the hands of the gang. Without Skipper, he would, of course, be helpless here in the woods.

Nevertheless, there was no other way. As soon as the men awoke, and found Big Ed still missing, they would certainly realize that

something was amiss. And that would probably mean the end for Ben.

Jerry knelt on the ground, and drew Skipper close to him. "Skipper," he whispered, "hush—and go—get—Ben."



## CHAPTER XXVIII

SKIPPER KEEPS BUSY



## CHAPTER XXVIII

### SKIPPER KEEPS BUSY

**B**EN lay on a hard bunk, bound hand and foot, and sleeping fitfully. They had tied him up as soon as they arrived at this place, only taking off the bindings on his hands when they brought him food. Often, he had heard the men talking among themselves, discussing whether or not they should kill him. So far, they had let him live, simply because they thought he might be valuable to them as a hostage, in case of trouble.

Lying there, Ben had been dreaming that he and Jerry were out over the ocean in an airplane. Jerry was piloting the plane—in the dream, his blindness was forgotten. Then, quite illogically, Skipper was there in the plane, too. She was yanking at Ben's sleeve. . . .

Ben opened his eyes, and for the moment it didn't surprise him to see Skipper there beside him. But then, suddenly, he remembered. His bound wrists fell within his startled gaze. From across the room came the sound of Dominick, snoring. And in the next room, he could



hear the heavy breathing of Luke and Multine. Yet there was Skipper, tugging at the blanket. Or was he still dreaming?

Ben blinked, and stared at the dog. He had heard nothing about Jerry and Skipper being in Glassville. So far as he knew, they were still in Whaley City; and very likely Jerry had fallen into whatever trap it was that the gang had rigged up for him there. Yet here was Skipper, staring pleadingly into his eyes! It seemed nothing short of a miracle.

Thoroughly awake now, Ben didn't stop to wonder any longer at the implausibility of it. The fact itself was enough. Skipper was here, and apparently none of his captors were awake. Very softly, Ben whispered to the dog: "Sh-h-h." If she should disturb Dominick or any of the others, that would be an end to the miracle.

Skipper seemed to understand. She was keeping as silent as Ben himself. But she couldn't understand why he didn't get up, and come with her. Her eyes plainly urged him to hurry along.

Ben rolled gently over on his side, and held out his wrists. Skipper looked at the ropes, puzzled. Ben pushed them against her teeth, and tried to make her understand, by making motions with his own teeth, that she was to

loosen them. Tentatively, Skipper took a rope between her teeth, and yanked at it lightly. Ben nodded at her, encouragingly. Reassured, Skipper worked harder at them. Gradually, they loosened.

It seemed to Ben that it was taking hours to get the ropes loose. Over there on the other side of the room, Dominick still snored softly; but Ben was in constant fear that he would wake up and discover what was going on. Once or twice, he tossed himself on the bunk, and his even snoring was interrupted; but each time he was soon breathing regularly again.

Working his wrists around, as Skipper tugged at the ropes, Ben finally was able to pull one hand free. Then it was an easy matter to disentangle the other, and to untie his feet. Warning Skipper again to keep quiet—though the precaution hardly seemed necessary—Ben slipped gingerly out of the bunk, and over to the door, standing half open.

Outside, Skipper immediately took charge, and led him eagerly around the corner of the bunkhouse to the place where Jerry was waiting. Ben could hardly believe his eyes, as he saw Skipper trot up to Jerry, saw Jerry standing there with anxious inquiry on his face, and then saw his face light up as he apparently heard Ben's footsteps.

Ben grasped him around the shoulders, and whispered in his ear: "How in the world did you get here, Jerry?" His voice broke, even as he whispered.

Jerry merely took him by the arms, and then gave him a pat on the back, such as he often gave Skipper. "Come on," he whispered. "We'll talk later."

Ben led the way along the road, with Skipper and Jerry following. They walked on briskly until they were sure they were beyond earshot of the logging camp. Then, slowing up but not stopping, Jerry told Ben what had happened to him in the last few days, and how he happened to have come here with Skipper to rescue Ben.

"Skipper has certainly been the heroine of this outfit," he said, sincerely. "She saved me twice and now she has saved you. Or, at least, I hope we're saved. After all, we aren't out of the woods yet, and the gang is still at large—all except Ribbus. I hope he's still locked up in that room, although I suppose even he may be free by this time."

Jerry felt of his watch. "A quarter to seven," he said. "The boys will be getting in from Washington in an hour. I'll tell you what I think we'd better do. Somebody ought to be there to tell them what has happened

since I called, and to tell them how to get here. I can't make good enough time to do it; but you can. Anyway, somebody ought also to be here, to keep tabs on whether these fellows try to get away or not. Now Skipper and I can hide back here in the woods, off the road. You go along into Glassville, and meet the boys at the hotel. If Big Ed is still there, they can take charge of him, and then they can come along up here and grab the others."

"I hate to leave you here," Ben protested. "If they should run onto you, they'd have no mercy."

"I don't believe they are very anxious to have to answer a charge of murder, along with all the rest," said Jerry lightly. "And anyway, they won't find me. Skipper and I can keep out of sight. Can't we, Skipper?"

The dog looked up at him, and barked lightly.

"Of course we can," said Jerry. "You pick out a good place for us, Ben, and then run along."

Ben stepped out into the woods, and soon came back and guided Skipper and Jerry in behind a clump of evergreen. He went back to the road, and walked up and down, making sure that they could not be seen. Then he rejoined them once more.



"I think you'll be all right here, if you just lie low," he said.

"Fine!" said Jerry. "Now hurry along into the village. If you hear any cars coming, you'd better duck off the road, though, until they pass. These fellows might start out, when they discover that Big Ed didn't get back and that you're gone."

"I'll watch out," Ben promised. "So long. See you soon."

"Good luck," said Jerry as he listened to Ben's footsteps making for the road.

Jerry stretched out comfortably on the ground, and Skipper settled down beside him. "I guess we deserve a little rest, Skipper," said Jerry. "We've had quite a day, when you consider that it's still early in the morning." The dog nudged up against him, and promptly went to sleep. Jerry, hearing her even, sonorous breathing, chuckled to himself. How many human beings, he wondered, would be able to put their heroics so quickly behind them, and forget about them, as if they were all a part of the day's work?

Jerry himself couldn't sleep, but he did relax. The danger, he knew, wasn't over; but it seemed so much less grave than it had a few hours ago, that he felt considerably less tense. He lay there, feeling quite comfortable, phys-

ically and mentally, for at least an hour, while Skipper slept peacefully at his side.

Sitting up, he felt of his watch. Yes, it was nearly time for Ben to be bringing up the reinforcements.

Skipper, aroused by Jerry's movements, jumped up, ready for his bidding.

Jerry stroked her. "No, Skipper," he said. "We aren't going yet. But it won't be long now."

He sat, waiting, his hand resting idly on Skipper's broad back. Then he lifted his head, as the sound of an automobile, somewhere in the distance, struck his ears.

"Maybe they're here, already, Skipper," he said. Then he was silent again, listening. There was also the possibility, he considered, that it might be the counterfeiters, coming out from the logging camp. His ears soon assured him, however, that the car was coming in, not out. And it was getting nearer.

He wondered if they were going to drive right in to the camp. That would be a foolish thing to do. Naturally, the men in there would hear the car coming, and would be all set either to scatter or to fight it out. The sensible thing would be to leave the car, and approach the place afoot. Then they could surround the camp, and take the men by surprise.



But the car was getting nearer, and louder. If it went beyond this point where he was hiding, the men down in the camp could hardly help hearing it. Perhaps Ben and the others didn't realize how near they were getting. It didn't seem reasonable that they would drive all the way in, knowingly.

"I think we'd better get out and stop the boys, Skipper, before they get any farther," he said. "Forward. Out to the road."

Skipper picked her way out through the trees, leading Jerry behind her. Jerry could hear the car getting nearer. He stood there in the road, with his free hand holding his staff in the air.

The car which he had been hearing came roaring around a corner. Jerry wondered why it didn't seem to slow up. He waved his staff.

Suddenly, he felt Skipper stiffen. Instinctively, he stiffened, too, though he didn't understand the reason for it.

Skipper could see what Jerry couldn't—that this wasn't a carful of friends, at all, but Big Ed Ribbus! Jerry, in his eagerness to make sure that his friends should not bungle the capture, had overlooked the possibility that it might be Big Ed, escaped from the hotel room and dashing back here to rejoin his compan-

ions. Even now this possibility didn't occur to him, puzzled as he was by Skipper's apparent alarm.

All Skipper knew was that this man in the car was an enemy, and that he was bearing down on them with terrific speed—driving directly at them. She stood poised for a second, and then, with the powerful car only a few feet away, she leaped with all her force at her master, her one thought being to push him out of the path of this onrushing motor car. As she jumped, the fender of the car caught her a fearful clip on the side of the head.

Caught off balance, Jerry stumbled headlong into the ditch, losing his grip on Skipper's harness as he fell. His head landed with a terrific jolt against a huge boulder, jutting out of the other side of the ditch. The car roared on, but Jerry didn't know it. He was sprawled out in the ditch. Big Ed, taking a quick look back, screwed his face up into a scowling grin. Jerry lay motionless, and the dog was squirming painfully toward his prostrate form.



## CHAPTER XXIX

### THE ROUND-UP



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### THE ROUND-UP

**B**EN had just come within sight of the hotel, when he saw Big Ed come rushing out and jump into his car. Ben quickly ducked behind a barn, realizing that he would be powerless to try to stop Ribbus now, and that the only thing to do was to keep out of sight, and then bring the secret service men out in a hurry, as soon as they arrived.

Big Ed's machine roared up the road toward the Notch, but Ben felt no qualms about that. Jerry was safely hidden in the woods, out of danger. To be sure, there was the possibility that Big Ed might warn his confederates that Jerry was on their trail; but they would hardly need much warning, when they woke up and discovered that he was gone. And the fact that Ribbus was going back to the others would make it all the easier for the secret service men to round them all up in a body, unless they got away too soon. That seemed unlikely, as it was already time for Jerry's former associates to be getting here.

The sound of Big Ed's car had hardly died



down in the distance, before a car, coming from the other direction, sped up to the hotel, and stopped, letting out three men. Then another car, close behind, came along with three more men. Ben's heart leaped with joy and he hurried toward the hotel.

The hotel man was talking excitedly to the group, when Ben got there. "This big fellow came running downstairs, and through the lobby like a streak," he was saying. "And then I went upstairs, and the blind fellow wasn't anywhere to be found. It beats ——"

Ben rushed forward and interrupted him, addressing himself to one of the new arrivals. "My name is Ben Dillon," he said, "Jerry's brother."

The whole group quickly turned to Ben with interest.

"I'm Jack Devery," said the man whom Ben had first approached. "Do you know where Jerry is?"

"He's all right," said Ben, and went on to explain what had happened since the day before.

"Those fellows will be lighting out," said Devery, as Ben finished recounting the recent events. "We'd better be getting up there before they duck us again. Come on."

The men jumped into their cars. "Come

on. You can ride with me," Devery called to Ben. "Hop right here in front."

They sped off up the Notch road, leaving the hotel man shaking his head after them in bewilderment and curiosity. They covered the three miles in hardly more than three minutes.

"There's the road, just ahead to the right," said Ben.

Devery drew up at the side of the highway. The other car, with brakes squealing, came to a stop behind him.

"How far in is it?" asked Devery.

"About two miles," said Ben.

Devery considered the situation for a moment, then turned to his companions in back. "What do you think? Had we better drive in part way, or leave the cars here?"

The question was hardly out of his mouth, before the sound of a motor car came from the woods.

"They're coming out now!" said Devery.

The men in the second car hopped out quickly, revolvers in hand.

"Quick!" said Devery to Ben and the others in his car. "Hop out, and be ready. When they get here, I'll block them with this car. You fellows nab them."

Ben and the two men in the back seat jumped out. Two of the men ran into the

woods, so they could come up behind the counterfeiters when they were stopped, and keep them from fleeing to the rear. The others stationed themselves in the underbrush, on either side of the logging road. Devery, with his motor running, waited in the car, just far enough from the entrance to the logging road so that his car could not be seen from the road.

Ben, hiding with two of the secret service men in the bushes, trembled with excitement as he heard the gang's cars coming nearer and nearer. He could tell by the roar that they were coming as fast as the uneven road would permit. The roar increased—and there they were!

Devery's car shot forward, and stopped, blocking the road completely. Ribbus, driving the first of the two emerging cars, shouted angrily, and jammed on his brakes. The second car, with the diminutive Luke at the wheel, slid crazily to a halt a few inches behind.

"Get that car out of the way!" Ribbus yelled, and Dominick, sitting beside him, reached in his coat pocket, his eyes narrowing.

Devery slid out of the farther side of his car, where he would be safe from any angry bullets.

"All right, boys," he said. "Just let 'em know they're surrounded. Give 'em a salute."

As he spoke, he took out his own revolver,

and fired it into the air. Almost simultaneously, revolvers popped at the right, at the left and in the rear.

The trapped counterfeiterers looked around wildly, handling their own revolvers, but with no targets in sight, and realizing that they were caught. Big Ed, however, jumped out of the car with a roar, and started around Devery's car toward Devery. But he stopped almost as soon as he started. A bullet whizzed out of the bushes, and he dropped his revolver with a cry of pain, and seized his wounded hand.

"All right," Devery called out. "The rest of you boys may as well drop the artillery, and come around here, one at a time."

Meekly, the four counterfeiterers obeyed, and the other secret service men and Ben emerged from the woods. The prisoners were thoroughly searched, handcuffed, and loaded into the automobiles.

Devery turned to Ben with a smile of triumph. "So that's that," he said. "Now we'd better go find that brother of yours, and tell him the news. You and he and that dog have certainly turned a nice trick."

"Jerry will certainly be glad," said Ben. "I can hardly wait to tell him that we've got these fellows at last."

“ I hope he’s all right, back there in the woods alone,” said Devery.

“ Oh, he’s all right. You don’t need to worry about that,” Ben assured him. “ And he’s not alone. Skipper is with him—the dog. She wouldn’t leave him for anything, short of a case of life or death. She ——”

He stopped short, his mouth hanging open. Coming down the logging road was Skipper, jogging doggedly along as though every step were a painful effort. And the side of her head was gashed and matted with blood!

## CHAPTER XXX

### THE LUCKY ACCIDENT





## CHAPTER XXX

### THE LUCKY ACCIDENT

“**S**KIPPER!” Ben shouted, running toward her.

The dog stopped, looked up at him, and turned around, trotting back the way she had come.

“She is trying to take us back to Jerry! Something must have happened!” Ben cried.

He started to follow her.

“Here! Wait a minute,” Devery called. “We’ll borrow one of these cars, and go in. The other boys can look out for the prisoners.”

He turned one of the cars around, and headed it in toward the logging camp. Ben climbed in, and Skipper, somewhat reluctantly, followed. Ben tried to examine her wounded head as they rode in, but Skipper impatiently drew away from him, intent on watching the side of the road. A few minutes later, they drew near the place where Ben had left Jerry, and Skipper began to bark.

“This is where I left them in the woods,” Ben said. “I don’t understand what could have happened.”

“Look!” said Devery. “There in the ditch!”

He stopped the car, and they jumped out.

“Jerry!” Ben cried, rushing toward him. But Devery, beside him, motioned for him to be calm; and felt for Jerry’s pulse.

“He’s all right,” said Devery. “At least, his pulse is all right. Help me lift him into the car.”

They rushed the unconscious Jerry to the hotel, and called a doctor. Skipper clung to her master’s side. Her head was still bleeding slightly, and matted hair covered her right eye completely; but until Jerry had been laid carefully on a bed in the hotel, she would not budge from his side.

Jerry regained consciousness just before the doctor arrived. He stirred slightly, then uttered a wild cry.

“The light! The light!”

“Must be delirious, poor fellow,” Devery said, in an undertone, to Ben.

Jerry clapped his hand to his eyes. “Ben!” he cried. “The light! I can see the light!”

Ben sank on his knees beside the bed, and put his hand on Jerry’s shoulder. “You mean—you can really ——”

“Yes, yes,” Jerry cried, excitedly. “I can see ——”

Just then the doctor came in. Devery quickly told him what had happened, and the doctor looked down on Jerry.

"You had better go out," he said to Ben and Devery. "The patient shouldn't get too excited."

Reluctantly, they started out of the room.

"The dog, too," said the doctor.

Skipper whined, and held her place.

"Skipper!" said Jerry, weakly. "Let her stay."

The doctor looked at her. "She's hurt," he said. "Somebody ought to take care of her just as soon as possible."

"Oh," said Jerry. "All right. Go on, Skipper."

"I'll take her to a veterinary," said Devery.

Skipper came reluctantly into the hall, but wouldn't leave the door until Ben insisted that she go with him downstairs. He got her into Devery's car, and Devery started for the veterinary's office. Ben came back into the hotel.

It seemed as if the doctor would never come down from Jerry's room. Once he came to the head of the stairs and called down for clean cloths, and again he came and called for hot water; but both times he disappeared again in Jerry's room, leaving the door sternly closed behind him.

After a while Devery came back, but without Skipper.

"The veterinary thought I had better leave her there for a while," he told Ben, soberly. "She's pretty badly hurt. The cut isn't so bad. That will heal up all right. But her right eye—is—gone."

"Her eye! Her eye! Oh, don't tell me she has lost an eye!" Ben cried.

He knew what that meant. Skipper was through as a guide dog. She could never lead Jerry any more. That was a job requiring full vision.

The doctor came downstairs. Ben jumped up and hurried to meet him.

"How is he?" he demanded. "Is he still delirious?"

"Delirious?" said the doctor. "He hasn't been delirious."

"But he said he could see light," Ben argued. "He ——"

"And so he can," said the doctor. "What's more, he'll be seeing a lot of things besides light before long. Apparently, he struck his head on a rock. Got a nasty jolt. But it seems to have knocked some nervous combination back into action, and given him back his sight. We'll have to keep him pretty quiet for a while. But this is going to prove one of the

luckiest accidents I ever knew anything about."

"Then he won't need Skipper any more," said Ben.

"Not to lead him," said the doctor. "But from what he tells me, I judge he'll need her as a friend for a long, long time. And you, too, my boy. He's pretty proud of both of you."

"It's pretty hard to understand, all at once," said Ben. "Jerry with his eyes back. Skipper with one of her eyes lost. But it will be great when we can all get together again—all three of us able to get along alone—and yet, I think we'll need each other more than ever."

THE END







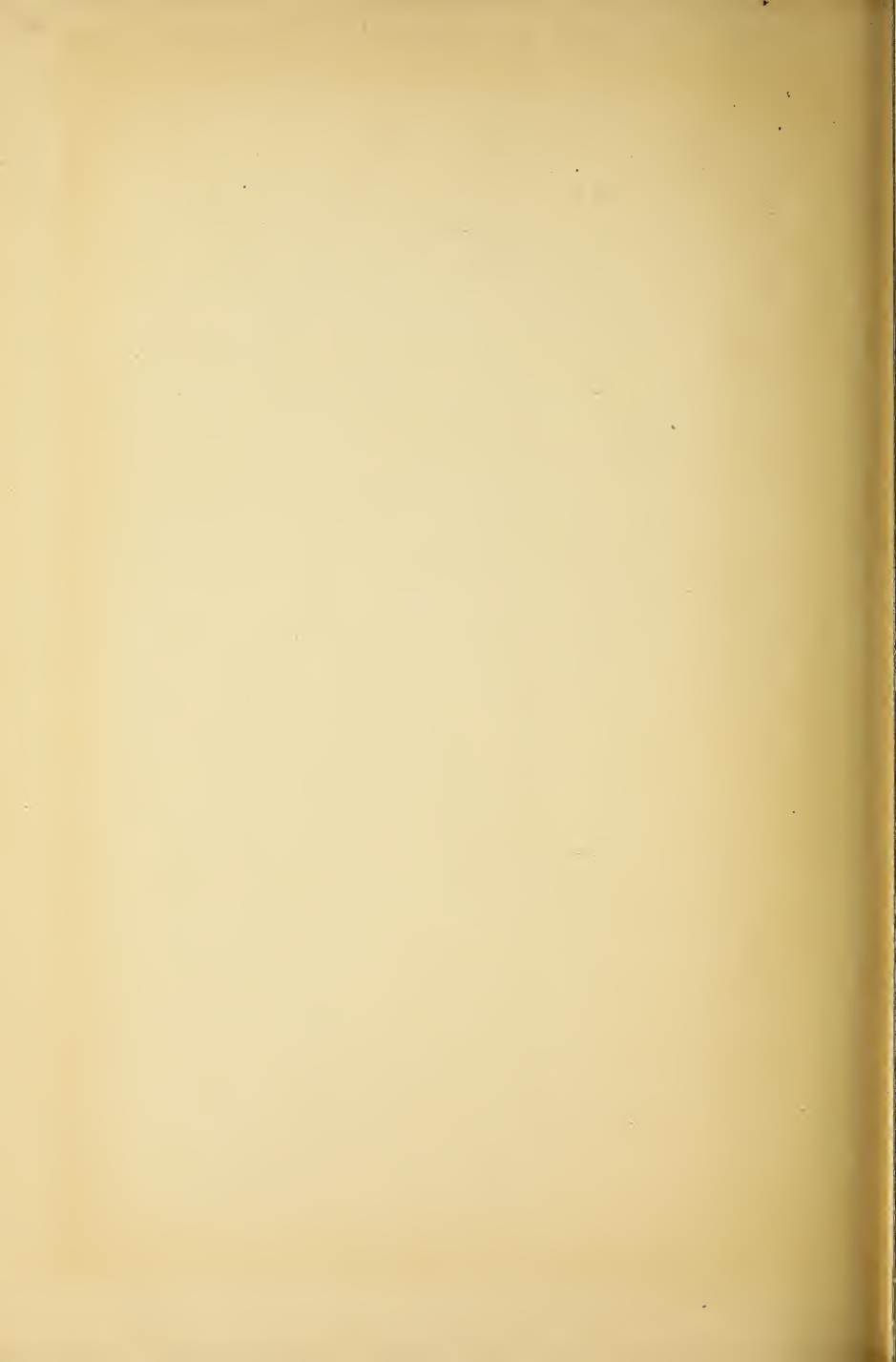












HV2345 Bartlett, Arthur C.  
B Skipper: the guide dog.

**DATE DUE**